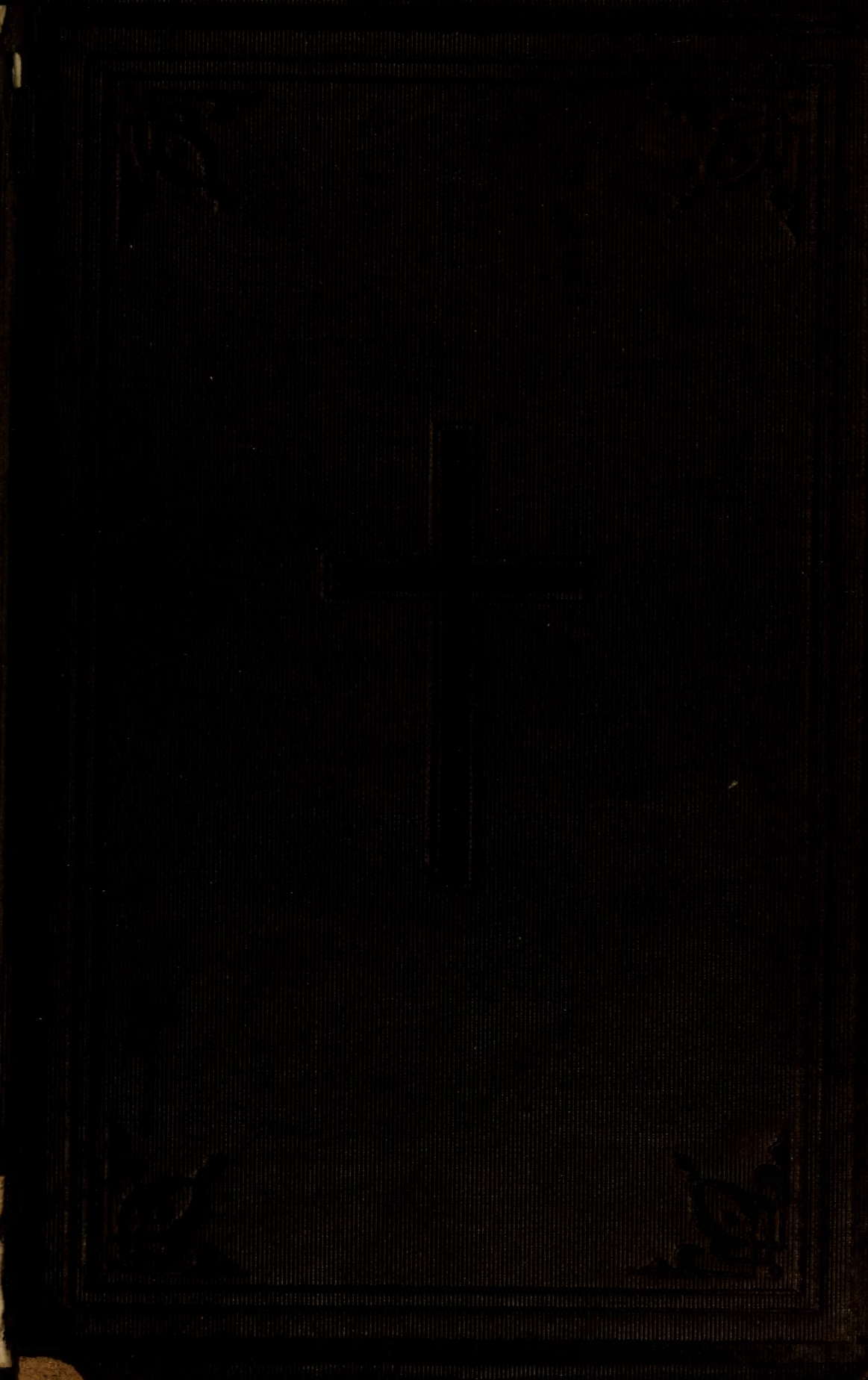

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

CHRISTIAN CONSIDERATIONS;

OR,

DEVOUT MEDITATIONS.

For Every Day in the Year.

BY

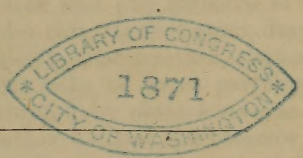
FATHER CRASSET, S. J.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,

BY MRS. ANNA H. DORSEY.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION,

BY REV. C. WALWORTH.



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INTRODUCTION.

THERE is great difference between a book for meditation, a book of meditations, and a meditation-book. The first simply suggests thoughts worthy of spiritual reflection; the second contains meditations in form, or model exercises of mental prayer already developed and perfected; the third is a practical helper and prompter to the soul that would practise mental prayer. Of the first class, the imitation of Christ is the master-piece, and stands unrivalled. Books of meditations abound, and excellent ones too, but of meditation-books we know of none which seem to us to fulfil their purpose, except this work of Father Crasset. Other authors, no doubt, have aimed at the same end, but so far as our acquaintance goes, the most successful can be said to have done little more than present good spiritual reading to the public in form of meditations. The aspirant to mental prayer who kneels down with such books before him, finds each thought presented to his mind developed and complete, and nothing is left for his own mind to do. The words of the author, if they have point and unction, may go to his heart and do him good, but not otherwise than any good book of spiritual reading. He may rise from his knees a better man, but he has not made a meditation.

It is not so with these "Considerations" of Crasset. Their excellence consists in this, that they are eminently suggestive. They never exhaust any thought, but simply propose it in such strong and striking terms, and with such a wonderful animation and depth of feeling, that the attention is arrested, the mind is interested and put forward at once upon a train of reflection. They have, besides this, all that same deep meaning, that earnestness, that expressive simplicity, that unction, that semblance of inspiration, which illuminate the pages only of those privileged writers, whose own souls have first been illuminated by close converse with God. Long exercise in meditation made Father Crasset the interior man he was, and gave him unquestionably his peculiar power as an author. The elasticity, freshness, and freedom from servile constraint of method which characterize his meditations, may be owing in part to another cause. His contemplative spirit was for a long time subjected to unskilful hands, which endeavored to compress it into a narrow and mechanical system of meditation, and so barely escaped destroying it. This at least taught him to appreciate afterwards the difficulties of others, and to understand how important it is to leave God room to talk to souls after his own way. We repeat once more, for those who aspire, not simply to read meditations, but to practise mental

prayer, this work of Father Crasset is the book of books. Like the golden sentences of Thomas à Kempis, his meditations have no sameness, never weary. Each point is like a wide gate, whence a world of pathways separate: you may enter again and again, follow a new path at every visit, and gather each time fresh flowers and new fruits of contemplation.

It is proper to say something here of the author's personal history, and yet we regret to say that we have no materials at hand, except the meagre account in "Feller's Biographical Dictionary," and some indistinct reminiscences of his interior trials, which we cannot now bring back to shape and certainty for want of time and opportunity.

We are barely able to state that Father Jean Crasset was a member of the Society of Jesus, that he was born at Dieppe, in France, and that he died in the year 1692. The germ of this present work was a small treatise published in Paris, entitled *Méthode d'oraison*, to which was appended a few meditations, arranged for every day in the month, with some spiritual canticles. Encouraged by the success of this little work, he increased the number of meditations, and published them again under the title of *Nouvelle forme de Meditations, &c.* This again being enlarged and more perfectly systematized, appeared once more in 1683 in its present form, and under the title which it still retains—*Considérations Chrétiennes.* We have no doubt that, appearing now in its English dress, it will acquire the same popularity as in the French and German tongues, and take its place among us as the standard book of its class.

With regard to the translation, we gladly yield place to the excellent and talented lady who made it. "If the translation is deficient in elegance," so she speaks to the publisher, "it has at least the merit of being a faithful one, which is, perhaps, after all of more importance. Some few of these Meditations are selected from an old copy of the work (*Nouvelle forme de Meditations*) published in 1673, being preferred on account of their brevity and superior force of expression, presenting, however, the same subjects for consideration. The portions of which the translation is abridged, are not at all connected with the order of the Meditations for the days of the year; being Meditations on the Lives of the Saints, detached Meditations on the Gospels, and selections from the 'Following of Christ.' The Meditations on the Gospels just alluded to, are generally a mere repetition or summary of those which follow each Sunday. To have included all these would have made too large a book for general use. In conclusion, I can only say, simply and sincerely, that I wish most earnestly that the work had been undertaken by some one more capable of performing it well." We think the reader will not agree to all that Mrs. Dorsey says. He will not concur in wishing that the work had fallen into other hands, or judge it to be wanting in the accomplishments of style. He will not say that the peculiar merit of the translation lies in an extreme fidelity to the original, but rather in not sacrificing to it the graces of our English tongue, which she has at such admirable command. We are all indebted to the pious lady that made this translation. It was not undertaken for pride or profit; it is an offering of devotion. May that beneficent hand which holds all blessings give a rich benediction to the fair translator, while it blesses the book and the reader!

C. W.

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THERE are many persons advanced in prayer who cannot use long meditations; some because they have not time enough to read them, others because they have too little memory to retain them. Besides this, when the mind sees already done for it what it had to do, and finds without trouble what it should have sought for by its own reflections, it becomes negligent and slothful, and loses itself in the vast territories opened before it. On the other hand, where there is only a little matter given to meditate on, it is retained without difficulty, digested with profit, and enjoyed all the more that every laborer loves his own work, and takes delight in what cost him something to make. The hunter who has been a long time looking up his game, feels a great joy when he discovers it. It is the same with our minds; a truth which cost the soul some labor in the finding, makes more impression than a hundred others presented to it ready found. Besides, it recognizes better the influence of grace when, after journeying like a pilgrim in a barren desert, it sees at length descending from heaven the celestial manna which is to be its food, and water flowing in abundance from the rocks to quench its thirst.

It will not do to load up the mind with too much matter, any more than the stomach with too much food. It hinders digestion. For this reason, St. Ignatius, that great man of prayer, in his Book of Exercises, gives very short meditations, and the farther we advance the less matter he presents for consideration, in order that the soul may place her confidence in God, ask light from Him, look to Him for help, apply the power He gives, and so recognize how little she has of her own, in order to humble herself, and for what she receives of God to thank Him for it. The kingdom of heaven is likened to a grain of mustard seed, a very little thing to be sure, but when bruised and beaten, it heats the stomach, and even draws tears from the eyes. It is the same with short points of meditation; when well masticated and digested, they kindle the fire of devotion, and draw from the heart tears of sorrow, penance and love.

There is every difference between reading and meditation. One who reads a book ought to understand it without pain or labor; the truth it presents ought to be apparent, without his being obliged to look it up. But when one meditates, he is expected to dig for himself in the Gospel field, and find there, by his own reflections, what treasures of grace are to enrich him, and the living waters which must quench his thirst. It is true, not every one is capable of occupying himself with his own thoughts, or of forming reflections, and this is the reason why distinguished men of our time have given to the public long and elaborate meditations, where each

truth is set out in all its force, and at full length, so that those who have no great penetration of mind, or cultivation of reason, may help themselves out by reading, and have nothing to do in their way of making meditation, except to relish what they read, and form good resolutions on the truths proposed. Such, indeed, as have quick, active, ardent, and solid minds, require a great deal of matter to occupy them, and are like the fire, which goes out as soon as there is no fuel left to nourish it.

I confess it is a difficult matter to satisfy every one; nevertheless, I venture to promise myself. that persons of every sort will be able to make use of these Meditations. Those who require only a little matter, will find enough in a single line to occupy them for a long while. Those who would have a great deal, can pass on from line to line, and rather want for time to finish than for matter to occupy them. Those, in fine, who cannot, or do not wish to meditate, if they read these considerations with a little application of mind, will, I hope, derive no small amount of strength, light, and consolation from them.

The learned reader will recognize without difficulty, that the truths comprised in this work are, for the most part, sentences from the Fathers, which I have translated into our own language. At first I had the intention to indicate them in the margin, but on reflecting that citations of this sort are only for books of doctrine, and that Father Dupont has not done so in his learned and beautiful Meditations, I abandoned the idea. Instead of sentences from the Fathers, I have given some from Holy Scripture, in order to support the truths proposed, and lend them, so to speak, a little seasoning; for the words of men are weak and insipid unless founded on and strengthened by the Word of God. Neither do they make the same impression, for there is an authority in the Sacred Text which carries with it the minds of men more surely than all the arguments of human reason. Those, therefore, who are content to act through simple motives of faith, may stop at these passages; those who wish to employ the reason also, and the imagination, can occupy themselves with the points which compose these Meditations.

There are meditations here on all the virtues, and the vices as well; on all the Mysteries of our Lord and of our Lady. Our founder, St. Ignatius, in his Book of Exercises, approved by the Holy See, would have all the most important meditations made twice, either that one may enjoy a second time the truth which had once touched the heart, or that it may be impressed more profoundly on the mind, or, in fine, that by digging again in the same sacred field, one may find there the spring of living water, which was not discovered first. It was for this reason that, in a former edition, I marked out for certain days a repetition of the preceding meditation. Another reason was that, being nearly all of them furnished with a great number of truths, and loaded, so to speak, with a multitude of provisions which could not be consumed in a day, it became necessary to divide them, and distribute them more equally. But some persons of a delicate turn, looked upon these repetitions as warmed-over dishes, and besought me to take them away, and to serve up some fresh food every day. This is what I have now undertaken to do, dividing those Meditations which were too long into two parts, and filling the days where they were wanting.

I entreat all those pious souls that converse with God, to remember him who prepared this nourishment for them, that he may not resemble those who built the Ark of Noah, but were not saved in it.

DEVOUT MEDITATIONS.

FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

THE GOSPEL. *Luke*, xxi. 25–33.

AT that time, Jesus said to his disciples: "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars: and upon the earth distress of nations, by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves, men withering away for fear, and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world. For the powers of Heaven shall be moved, and then they shall see the Son of Man coming in a cloud, with great power and majesty. But when these things come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption is at hand. And he spoke to them a similitude: See the fig-tree and all the trees: when they now shoot forth their fruit, you know the summer is nigh: so likewise when you see these things come to pass, know that the kingdom of God is at hand. Amen I say to you, this generation shall not pass away till all things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Meditation.

ON THE LAST JUDGMENT.

1ST POINT. There is an eye that sees all: there is an ear that hears all: there is a hand that writes all. The eye that sees all, does not discover itself; the ear that hears all, is not revealed; the hand that writes all is not seen. I see not, yet I am seen; I hear not, and I am heard; I know not, and I am known. Oh my God! that Thou shouldst behold the secret and hidden thoughts of my heart! that Thou shouldst hear

every sinful and idle word that I utter! that Thou shouldst write down the abominable record of my crimes!

Nothing will be lost; nothing shall be forgotten; all passes from time to eternity. That which has passed shall return; that which we believe to be lost, will be brought to light, and revealed to all men. The sinner will die, but his sins shall never die; they will remain as long as God is God. That which passes during time will not end with time. A sin is easily committed, but unless it is blotted out by penitence an eternity cannot efface it.

2d Point. All will be examined without exception; all shall be judged without distinction; the wicked shall be condemned without grace, and punished without remission or compassion. Unhappy I, when the book of my conscience shall be opened! when the abominable history of my life shall be exposed to the eyes of the whole world! Unhappy I, when my judge shall call me before his tribunal, and say to all his creatures: Behold the man, and that which he has done. Behold all the good I have done him, and all the evil he has done me!

It will be necessary to render an account at the last day, of the good we have received from God, and the good we have done for Him—of the good we have done, of the good we have not done; of the evils we have committed, and of the evils we are responsible for; of the evil that we have approved of, the evil we have not repented of; the evil we have not exposed; of the evil in which we have been an accomplice; of the evil of which we have been the occasion; of the evil which we have caused, it may be by our counsel, it may be by our consent, it may be by our command, it may be by our suggestion and will, it may be by our flatteries, it may be by our negligence, it may be by our assistance, it may be by our support, it may be by our example, it may be by the scandal we have given. A man will be damned as often as he has caused souls to be damned; a man will be crowned in Heaven as often as he has caused souls to be saved.

3d Point. "Come to me, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!" Oh words full of consolation! "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!" Oh formidable sentence! Where shall I hide myself when I am sought? What will become of me when I am judged? what answer shall I make when I am questioned? Where shall I fly when they pursue me? What shall I do when I am sentenced?

What shall I do when I am damned? Oh day full of horrors! Oh judgment full of terrors!

Oh my God! what will be my destiny? Shall I be saved? shall I be damned? Shall I be of the number of the predestined? shall I be among the number of the reprobates? All is veiled in uncertainty. That only which is certain is, if you live for God you will be saved; if you die impenitent you will be lost eternally. Your sentence is written on your tongue; you will be justified by your words, and condemned by your words. Accuse yourself in time that you may be excused in eternity. Condemn yourself now, and you will be absolved then. Love your neighbor and forgive your enemy, and you will be forgiven. Show mercy, and it will be shown to you.*

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Every idle word that men shall speak they shall render an account for it in the day of judgment." *Matt.* xii.

"For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." *Ibid.*

"For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ." *Rom.* xiv.

"For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil." 2 *Cor.* v.

"The Lord will come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise from God." 1 *Cor.* iv.

"If the just man shall scarcely be saved, where shall the wicked and the sinner appear?" 1 *Peter*, iv.

FIRST MONDAY IN ADVENT.

Meditation.

ON THE END OF MAN.

1st Point. From whence do I come? To whom do I belong? I have come from God. I belong to God. I exist only in God.

* "The words of Scripture should always be read at the beginning or the end of each Meditation; and it is well to offer up a short prayer, when you are arrested by those sentences which touch the heart and occupy the mind. On Sundays it is necessary first to read the Gospel."—*Crasset.*

I was created to serve Him. As I proceed only from God, He alone should be my chief aim. My existence is not necessary to God, but He has created me, and it is necessary that I should serve Him. Happy necessity which obliges me to be under so good a master, to love so tender a father, to serve so great a king, to work for a God so infinitely pure and perfect.

2d Point. All things speak to me of God. Every thing draws me to God. His divine compassion excites my love. The wonders of creation declare his glory. His judgments cause me to fear Him. Every thing assures me that I do not deserve to live, unless I devote my life to God. That I am not worthy of an immortal soul, unless I consecrate its powers to the service of God. That it is impossible for me to serve two masters. That I must choose between God and the devil.

3d Point. Which of these, my soul, do I obey? A God of infinite love and majesty, or a spirit of infinite evil and malice? For the interests of which do I work? To the inspirations of which have I listened? Whom have I sought to please? Which is my master? Alas! the enemy of God has been my master! I have executed his malicious designs.

Oh, what blindness and infidelity! Retire from me, Satan; I renounce thee forever. Thou art not my master; and I will never be thy slave. Oh, God of my heart! pardon me my sins, and judge me not according to the rigor of thy justice. Receive a poor penitent soul, who is humbly contrite for his faults; who is in extreme grief, and desires to repair them; who wishes to change his life, and be governed by thy law. I wish no longer to serve any master but Thee. I wish to love no other than Thee. I wish to live only for Thee, in time and in eternity. Amen.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"I spoke with my tongue: Oh Lord, make me know my end, and what is the number of my days, that I may know what is wanting to me." *Psalm*, xxxviii.

"And every one that calleth upon my name, I have created him for my glory; I have formed him and made him." *Isaias*, xxviii.

"The Lord hath made all things for himself: the wicked, also, for the evil day." *Prov.* xvi.

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, saith the Lord God, who is, and who was, and who is to come." *Apoc.* i.

"Hear, oh ye heavens, and give ear, oh earth, for the Lord

hath spoken. I have brought up children, and exalted them: but they have despised me." *Isaias*, i.

FIRST TUESDAY IN ADVENT.

Meditation.

ON DEATH.

1st Point. It is appointed for you once to die. You will die only once. You know not the day, or the hour of your death; you know not where or how you will die; you do not know in what state you shall die. Death may surprise you in the midst of your sins and pleasures; it may come in an hour when you least expect it. As your life has been, so will your death be. One cannot learn in a moment a science he has never known. One cannot forget in a moment a science which he has always known. How can you love God in the dread hour of death, after hating Him all your life? Will you hate sin at the moment of dying, after loving it all your life? You have never learned in life to produce acts of Christian virtue, how can you do it when all your energies are wasted by the pangs of sickness? You know no other science than that of offending God; how can you forget it at the hour of your death?

2d Point. After death you shall be judged. After judgment you will be saved or lost. What will you then wish to have done? What will you wish that you had not done? What will you wish to have suffered on earth—what mortifications, what penance, what humiliations!

Do now what you would wish to have done then. Leave undone now, that which you will wish then you had not done. Suffer now what you would wish then to have suffered.

3d Point. You shall leave all your goods and possessions at the portals of eternity. Your glory cannot descend with you to the tomb. Your pleasures shall be turned into bitterness, and your love into hatred. You shall only carry from this life the good and evil you have done in it: the good, in order to be recompensed; the evil, that you may be punished. That which was your pleasure during life shall be your torment after death. That which is your cross and affliction in life, shall procure you great joy after death, if you suffer for God and in God.

Oh, inexorable death! Oh, inexorable judgment! Oh, inexorable damnation! Am I without a soul, that I banish all thoughts

of death? I am without reason if I do not fear it. I am attached inordinately to life if I fear death too much. I do not love Jesus if I do not desire death. I do not merit being saved if I do not fear eternal loss. I have abused time, and trodden under foot the grace of God, if I have not spent my days in preparing for eternity.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"And the Lord said to Moses: Behold, the days of thy death are nigh: call Josue, and stand ye in the tabernacle of the testimony, that I may give him a charge. So Moses and Josue went, and stood in the tabernacle of the testimony." *Deut.* xxxi.

"Oh, death! how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that hath peace in his possessions." *Eccles.* xli.

"Man knoweth not his own end, but as fishes are taken with the hook, and as birds are caught with the snare, so men are taken in the evil time, when I shall suddenly come upon them." *Eccles.* ix.

"The lord of that servant will come in a day that he expecteth not, and at an hour that he knoweth not, and shall separate him, and shall appoint him his portion with unbelievers." *Luke*, xii.

"Take order with thy house; for thou shalt die, and shalt not live." *Isaias*, xxxviii.

FIRST WEDNESDAY IN ADVENT.

Meditation.

IT IS NECESSARY TO PREPARE ONESELF FOR DEATH AND JUDGMENT.

1st Point. Are you ready to die? Have you put your affairs in order? Have you any affair of such importance, as your eternal safety, to occupy you? Do you think it possible to escape death? One who is certainly expected, and will surely come, may arrive at any moment. You do not expect to live, yet cannot realize that you must die. The affairs of this life are fleeting, and require but little time, but a preparation for eternity demands much. What higher science can you attain, than that of learning here to die well? It is a perilous thing to avoid all thoughts of death until your last hour is at hand! How can you prepare for judgment at the moment when you approach the tribunal of your judge?

2d Point. Every one studies that pursuit on which depends his success in life. It should be the business of all men to learn how

to be saved. It is not necessary to study in order to die. But it is necessary both to think and act, in order to die well. It is impossible to perform well that which one has done only once. In order therefore to die well, it is necessary to die often. Is life too long to prepare for death? Is time at your disposal, that you banish all thoughts of eternity? How can you produce supernatural acts, having been governed all your life by nature? How can you destroy within yourself, when diseased and weak, those habits which have thrust their roots down, even to hell? One can easily perform those acts which have been acquired by habit. If you do not make a remote preparation for death, the anguish of dying will be unspeakable. Of sin came death. The evil is irreparable. Judgment follows death, and eternity follows judgment. Are your accounts ready? When God shall question you, what will you reply? Can you learn how to defend yourself, when the enemy presses on you? Is it time to supply a garrison when every part is besieged? Awake, or you shall be taken in a snare. Prepare for death, or death will find you at a moment when you least expect it. He who watches not, shall be surprised, and he who is surprised by death, will be damned. Learn then all that you should know; which it is important for you to understand; which you must persevere in; which, only in time, you can accomplish! It is dangerous to fail, because such a failure can never be repaired, and its pains will never end.

Do not trust to time, it is delusive. Depend not on your health, it is like unfaithful soil, which will crumble away beneath you, while you exult in your safety. When you imagine that death is far distant, then it is most near. Has it not come to many unawares? May it not come also to you? Oh my God! I thank Thee, for having given me time to prepare for death. How is it with me if I am, at this moment, near the hour of my death?

Henceforth I will watch without ceasing, since I have an enemy who never slumbers, and who lays a snare for me on every side. In order to die well, I will each day make a remote preparation for death, that, dying often, I may meet death in the humble and peaceful hope of eternal life.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Remember that death is not slow." *Eccles.* xiv.

"Watch ye, therefore; for ye know not the day nor the hour." *Matt.* xxv.

"Watch ye, therefore, praying at all times, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that are to come, and to stand before the Son of Man." *Luke*, xxi.

"If then thou wilt not watch, I will come to thee as a thief; and thou shalt not know at what hour I will come." *Apoc.* iii.

"Be ye also ready, because at what hour ye know not, the Son of Man will come." *Matt.* xxiv.

FIRST THURSDAY IN ADVENT.

Meditation.

ON THE GOOD WORKS WHICH WILL SERVE US WHEN WE ARE JUDGED.

1st Point. A Christian without good works is like a tree without fruits; earth without produce; a lamp without oil; a vessel without a crew or provisions. His faith is sterile and unproductive. His spirit is in the shadow of death, and his life is almost extinguished. Those who do nothing, believe nothing. Those who believe, and do not, shall be more severely punished than those who have no faith.

2d Point. The more light you have, the greater obligation are you under to live well. The more knowledge you have, the more culpable you are, if you neglect your salvation. Much shall be required of those who have received much. Those who do no good, do much evil. Sterility is a form of iniquity which renders a Christian culpable. The fig tree which produces no fruit is burned. The talent is taken from him who hides it in the earth.

3d Point. Faith will save us or damn us; it will render us better or worse. To believe good, and do evil, is to be judged before death: it is to be condemned before we are accused. Those who do not practice what they believe, will soon cease to believe that which they do not perform. Faith does not exist long in the soul when the fruitful life of charity is extinguished.

Then let your good works abound. Be not weary in well-doing. Do them in a state of grace; do them for a good end; do them without delay; let them now equal in number those that are bad, which you have done. Do all the good that you are capable of, yet believe that you have done nothing meritorious. Do them while you can. Work while it is day, for the night cometh when no man shall work.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then He will render to every man according to his works." *Matt.* xvi.

"Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to render to every man according to his works." *Apoc.* xxii.

"Do you not see that by works man is justified, and not by faith alone?" *James*, ii.

"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead." *James*, ii.

"I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and I find none. Cut it down therefore; why cumbereth it the ground?" *Luke*, xiii.

"But the earth that drinketh in the rain which cometh often upon it, and bringeth forth thorns and briars, is rejected, and very near to a curse, and is to be burnt." *Hebrews*, vi.

"Then shall the king say to them who sit on his right hand: Come ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink; a stranger, and you took me in. Then shall He say to those on His left hand: Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, and you gave me not to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me not to drink; a stranger, and you took me not in; naked, and you clothed me not; in prison, and you visited me not." *Matt.* xxv.

"Therefore while we have time let us do good to all men." *Galatians*, vi.

FIRST FRIDAY IN ADVENT.

Meditation.

THE REPENTANCE WHICH PREPARES US FOR JUDGMENT.

1st Point. Repentance, or hell! To weep in time, or to weep through eternity. A sin of a moment merits an eternity of tears. How much ought not he to weep who has committed an infinite number of sins? Alas, I sin, and no tears of contrition follow; I sin continually, yet spare not a moment for repentance.

2d Point. There are only two roads which lead to eternity. One is on the right, and the other on the left. That which is on the right, leads up to heaven. That which is on the left, leads

down to hell. The road to Heaven is narrow, it is steep, it is difficult. The road to hell is broad and pleasant, and filled with all that can gratify the senses. There are but few pilgrims toiling up the steep and rugged path to Heaven. Delirious multitudes throng the broad and pleasant road which leads to hell. All who are not in the narrow way on the right, are in the beaten and easy path on the left, hurrying towards eternal woe. Whither do you travel? In which road do you walk? Do you walk in the road of the commandments of God? Do you mortify your passions? Do you repose in luxuries, and rejoice in superfluities? Are you content with the necessities of your state? Do you crave nothing beyond the necessaries of life? Do you sin frequently? In what manner do you do penance?

3d Point. Alas! methinks I see you in the broad and frequented road of perdition! You live only according to the laws which govern those who walk therein. You seek no other or better way. You imitate the vices of those around you. You scorn the Christian virtues of those who toil up the steep and weary road to heaven. You give the reins to your inclinations. You give ear to all the suggestions of your passions, which are neither regulated or measured. You think only of those delights which are spread like snares before you; your only care is, to find ease and gratification in your progress through this road of illusions. You drink only of the sweet waters of life; the chalice of its bitterness displeases and disgusts you. You have chosen the way of sin. You are determined to persevere in sin. You fly from thoughts of penance. But unless you do penance, death will come in the midst of your sins, leaving you no time for repentance. If you do no penance in time, you cannot do it in eternity. A bitter and hopeless death is the end of a life of ease and gratification. Oh my God! spare me not in time! Give me stripes and bitterness here, so Thou givest me thyself in eternity.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Bring therefore fruits worthy of penance." *Luke*, iii.

"I tell you no, but except you do penance, you shall all likewise perish." *Luke*, xiii.

"Enter ye in at the narrow gate, for wide is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat." *Matt.* vii.

"Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. *Matt.* iii.

"How narrow is the gate and strait is the way which leadeth to life, and how few there are who walk therein." *Matt.* vii.

FIRST SATURDAY IN ADVENT.

Meditation.

ON DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN, WHOSE INTERCESSION CAN RENDER OUR JUDGE FAVORABLE TO US.

1st Point. To appease the anger of God, have recourse to the powerful intercession of Mary. She is the Mother of all the just; she is the advocate of all sinners; she is the queen of all the predestined! They were given to her, by her divine Son, at the foot of the cross, in the person of the disciple whom He most loved. In offering his life to God on the altar of the cross, she has procured life for all men; and in sacrificing her Son to the Father, she has co-operated in their salvation.

2d Point. Approach the Father through the Son; go to the Son through the Mother. The Father refuses nothing to the Son, the Son refuses nothing to the Mother. As I can be saved only through the intercession of the Son, I ought to hope to be saved through the intercession of the Mother. The Son is our Mediator with the Father; the Mother is our Mediatrix with the Son. Jesus is the head of the Church, united to the mystical body by Mary. Jesus is the fountain of Grace; Mary is the channel through whom all may find refreshment. Jesus is the Sun of the world; Mary is the moon which giveth joy to our night.

3d Point. Oh holy Mother of God! oh refuge of sinners! oh strong defence of the miserable! The fearful dread of my soul is dispersed by the knowledge that thou canst procure my eternal safety by thy intercession. Thy Son is truly my Saviour, but He is also my Judge. His goodness and clemency encourage me, but his justice terrifies me. Knowing my guilt, I dare not approach Him. But from thee, my tender and compassionate Mother, I have nothing to fear. Thou art the Mother of grace, and not of justice. Thou didst wish to become a mother, in order to give us a Saviour. Wouldst thou have been the Mother of God, if there had been no sinners? Thou art, then, under some obligation to them, for the high and wonderful dignity to which God has elevated thee. I am a sinner; I am the chief among sinners; yet I cannot despair of my salvation, because thou art my advocate and refuge. Why should I fear, if I am truly contrite, if I sincerely desire to be converted, having an advocate all-powerful with the Father, and an advocate all-powerful with the

Son? Oh Mother of Jesus, receive me as thy child, that I may be the child of God. Receive me as the least of thy servants, that I may be numbered with the predestined.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Jesus saith to his mother, Woman, behold thy son. After that, he saith to his disciple, Son, behold thy mother." *John*, xix.

"And from that hour the disciple took her to his own." *Ibid.*

"And they said to me, Let thy dwelling be in Jacob and thy inheritance in Israel, and take root in my elect." *Eccles.* xxiv.

"He that shall find me shall find the life, and shall have salvation from the Lord." *Proverbs*, viii.

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

THE GOSPEL. *Matt.* xi. 2–10.

"At that time, when John had heard in prison the works of Christ, sending two of his disciples, he said to Him: Art Thou He who is to come, or look we for another? And Jesus, making answer, said to them: Go and relate to John what you have seen and heard. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in me. And when they went their way, Jesus began to say to the multitude concerning John: What went ye out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what went ye out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Behold, they that wear soft garments live in the houses of kings. But what went ye out to see? A prophet? Yea, I tell you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written: Behold, I send my angel before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee."

Meditation.

"ART THOU HE WHO IS TO COME?"

1ST POINT. Lord, art Thou He who was to come into the world, to deliver it from the tyranny of the devil, from the guilt of sin, from the bitterness of death? Why is it, then, that I am still the slave of hell? Art Thou He who wast to be born of a virgin, and reign on the throne of David, He whose kingdom should spread to the uttermost ends of the earth, who was to ap-

pease the wrath of God, and satisfy his justice for our sins; He who was to pay our ransom, close the gates of hell, and open the portals of Heaven, who was to give us peace, and restore us to that state of innocence from which we have fallen? Ah! why is it, then, that I am yet an exile from this kingdom of peace? Why is it that I travel in pain, while my heart is troubled? why is it that so many souls are lost, and so few saved? why is it that I always feel the insupportable weight of my sins? Alas, it is because my soul is without faith; it is because I have not believed; it is because I have abused thy grace; it is because I desire to be saved without doing any thing to merit salvation. It is because I am indifferent to the joy of being at peace with Thee and thy Father, and have continually defied Thee.

Oh my soul, why do you delay to enter into this kingdom of peace? when will you place on your shoulders the sweet yoke of Jesus Christ? He has created you, but He cannot save you without your own consent. He who made you without a wish of your own, will not justify you unless you wish it.

2d Point. Art Thou the Lord? Art Thou He whose coming the prophets for ages foretold, whom the patriarchs expected, whom the nations desired? Art Thou He who was to come, to give sight to the blind, to heal the leper, to open the ears of the deaf, to cause the lame to rise up and walk, to restore the dead to life? Alas! why is it that I cannot hear thy voice? why do I stumble and falter like one lame? why is it that I hear thy gospel, and neither discern thy face nor profit by it? Alas! it is because I regard the maxims of the world more than I do thy law; it is because my ill-regulated passions fill my heart with confusion and tumult; it is because I do not desire to be thy disciple, or to declare thy faith before the world. Alas! if I believe not, the ordeal is passed, and I am already judged; if I believe, and do not live according to those things which my faith teaches, my faith will judge and condemn me.

3d Point. Art Thou He who was to come, to be immolated on our altars, in order to become our priest and our victim; in order to present our adoration in a more worthy manner, to God thy Father; to thank Him for all his benefits, to make satisfaction for the punishment which is due for our sins, and to obtain for us those inestimable graces which are necessary for our salvation? Why is it, then, that I always assist at this divine sacrifice with so little fervor, that I attend these holy mysteries with so little devotion and reverence? why is it that I so seldom desire to behold Thee and receive Thee?

I see now, oh my God, how faithless and impious I have been; that I have believed I owe Thee nothing; that I have been ungrateful, and do not wish to acknowledge the debt which I owe Thee; that my vain and haughty spirit has forbidden me to acknowledge myself a sinner; that I am presumptuous, and an unbeliever who has felt no dependence on Thee, or desired thy grace.

FOR THE SAME DAY.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. Art Thou, oh Lord, He who was to come into my heart, veiled under the mystical form of bread, but really and entirely present? that, united with my soul, Thou mightest nourish it, sanctify it, and purify it? that Thou mightest heal it, strengthen it, and enrich it, by thy grace and merits, and apply to it the fruits of thy bitter passion, and impart to it thy spirit, in order to make it one of thy members? Art Thou He, oh Lord, who was to come to be my life, my good, my nourishment, my pastor, my physician, my sovereign, my father, my all? Why is it then that I so seldom receive Thee; that when Thou dost come into my heart, I have no better welcome for Thee than coldness and neglect? Ah, clement Lord! it is because I have not loved Thee. It is because I take no pleasure in thy society, and do not believe that Thou art the true life and nourishment of my soul. Because I have persuaded myself that I can slight thy graces with impunity; that it is not necessary for me to possess Thee in order to do good; and that without Thee, I can, of myself, abstain from all evil; that I can without thy succor, combat with the devil, and resist his snares and temptations.

2d Point. Finally, oh Lord, is it Thou who wilt come to judge me? who wilt descend from Heaven to earth with great power and majesty, and before angels and men, call me to an account for the deeds which I have done in the body? who will reveal all things which are hidden, and reproach me, because when Thou dwelt on earth in the form of a pilgrim and a stranger, I opened not the door of my heart to Thee, or invited Thee to enter, although Thou didst so long and so often stand waiting without?

Art Thou He who will come to save me if I am innocent, and damn me if I am guilty? Why is it, then, that knowing Thou

art to be my judge, I take so little pains to solicit thy favor, to appease Thee, to serve Thee, and cause Thee to look on me with complacency? Why is it that I do nothing to merit thy favor, and secure my safety? Alas! it is because I have not feared Thee, or been terrified by the threats of thy vengeance; it is because I have placed no faith in thy promises; because I have thought neither of Heaven, or death, or hell. It is because I have been indifferent as to whether I shall be saved or lost; whether I shall possess Thee through eternity, or lose Thee through eternity. But from this moment I will seek to change my life. I desire from henceforth, oh Lord, to love Thee, and receive Thee so frequently, that at last, Thou wilt in turn, receive me into thy eternal kingdom, where I may praise and bless Thee forever.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold thy king cometh to thee." *Matt.* xxi.

"He that giveth testimony of these things saith, surely I come quickly. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus." *Apoc.* xxii.

"The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; He will save us." *Isaias*, xxxiii.

"Christ shall come to his temple and purify his priesthood." *Malachias*, iii.

SECOND MONDAY IN ADVENT.

Meditation.

ON HUMAN RESPECT.

"*Blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in me.*" Matt. xi.

1st Point. Displease God or displease men. Omit the good which you ought to perform through human respect; believe in Jesus Christ and be ashamed of his word; counterfeit his faith like a hypocrite, when you are obliged to profess it! This is the way to be an apostate and a deserter of religion—a Christian in name and an infidel in heart. There are three kinds of apostacies—one of the heart, one of the lips, one of the actions. Are you not an apostate in heart? Are you not in words? Are you not in deeds? Do you not commit evil to please men? Do you not omit the performance of good works for fear of displeasing them? Do you not entertain bad or impious senti-

ments? Do you not speak the language of the libertine and the detractor? Do you not live as the wicked do?

2d Point. In order to be saved it is not enough to have faith in the heart. It is necessary to declare with your lips that you are a Christian, and a disciple of Jesus Christ. But it is not sufficient to say simply, 'I am a Christian;' it is also essential that your works shall be worthy of the faith you profess. To believe all that a Christian believes, and live like an infidel, is to render yourself doubly guilty. It is sinning against the Holy Ghost; it is contending with his inspirations; it is burying the talent which God has given you; it is withholding unjustly that which is not really yours; it is writing your judgment, and pronouncing sentence against yourself.

Ah! can it be that you are one of those false Christians, one of those detestable hypocrites, who have a consecrated head and a profane heart; who hold the faith of the Son of God, and bear the malice of devils? If you confess Jesus Christ before men, He will confess you before his Father. If you deny Him before men, He will renounce you before God his Father. If you are ashamed to declare yourself his disciple, He will be ashamed to appear as your master. If you acknowledge Him for your Lord before men, He will recognize you as his servant before his holy angels.

3d Point. Oh Jesus, my Lord, what a strange spectacle do I not present to the world! They are in doubt, and inquire whether I am a Christian or an infidel. I adore Thee in prosperity, and blaspheme Thee in adversity. I confess Thee secretly before angels, and renounce Thee publicly before the world. I revere thy law, and am ashamed to practice it; I make profession of thy doctrines, and blush at thy example; I scandalize thy humility, thy poverty, thy cross, thy passion, thy suffering, thy death! I have not the courage to say, I believe that which Thou hast declared, since I am ashamed to do those works of humility and mortification which Thou hast done. The unworthy fear of "*what will they say*," causes me to renounce the duties which my faith demands me to perform. I am more afraid of the raillery of the wicked, than the martyrs were of the cruel tortures of tyrants.

Oh my God! it is now that I behold my misery! It is now that I desire to commence in reality a Christian life, and make an open and sincere profession of piety. I will no longer fear to displease those who are thy enemies, and with whom Thou art displeased. I shall cease to be tormented by the fear of their

contempt, and the dread of offending them. As my body cannot be immolated for the love of Thee, I will suffer a martyrdom of heart, and regard my enemies as tyrants, whose persecutions will confer on me at last, the crown of martyrdom.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"He that feareth man shall quickly fall." *Prov.* xxix.

"And I say to you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do." *St. Luke*, xii.

"Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God." *Ibid.*

"But he that shall deny me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God." *Ibid.*

"For whomsoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He shall come in his majesty, and of his Father's, and of the holy angels." *St. Luke*, ix.

SECOND TUESDAY IN ADVENT.

Meditation.

ON ACTIVE SCANDAL AND BAD EXAMPLE.

1st Point. Bad example is a bad instructor. It teaches evil to those who have hitherto been unconscious of it; it persuades those to commit sin who had always entertained a horror of it; it teaches those who have always hated evil to love it; it makes itself easy and pleasant to those who have hitherto feared it; it controls those who would fly from it; it renders itself honorable to the great, necessary to the obscure, and agreeable to the wicked. One scandalous person works more evil than all the saints have done good. Bad example damns more souls than the most zealous preachers have saved. Ignorance of evil is a part of innocence, and one of the best ramparts of virtue. Those who have never seen evil committed, think not of seeking it. They will entertain a horror of it unless they see it committed and excused by others. One is ashamed to practice virtue among the wicked, and to be innocent among the guilty.

2d Point. Do you live in sin? Have you given a bad example to your neighbor? has your life been a scandal to others? have you not made war with innocence? have you not derided

and mocked good men? have you not prevented devotion in others? are you not a monster of iniquity and an emissary of the devil? has not your bad example been an eloquent advocate of evil? How many souls have you not ruined? how much purity have you not sullied by your bad actions? how many sins have you not committed? how many of your fellow-beings have you not debauched and precipitated into hell, by your lewd conversation and your infamous example? What good have you done to repair all this evil? What good can you ever do which will equal the loss of one soul? How shall you ever indemnify Jesus Christ for luring to ruin the sheep of his fold; for debauching his subjects; for persecuting his members, whom you have delivered to blood, to death, and destructive passions? Oh what displeasure have you caused the holy angels! oh what wounds have you not inflicted on the holy Church! The sins which you have committed during your life are innumerable. After death you will still sin through the influences which the bad example of your life have generated, and which will continue, though the silence of the grave enfolds you, and the pangs of hell encompass you, through all time.

3d Point. Oh scandalous soul! what has the Lamb of God done to you that you should persecute Him? what has your neighbor done, that you seek his eternal ruin? what have the holy angels done, that you should grieve them? Has the devil been so great a benefactor to you that you thus earnestly endeavor to satisfy all his demands? Can it be that the piety of your neighbor provokes you to malice? do you seek his ruin only that you may triumph over innocence? Have you not sins enough of your own to account for, without loading yourself with the sins of others? do you not fear they will fasten a millstone about your neck, which will precipitate you into the depths of hell, for having scandalized one or many of his little ones? And what, think you, will be your sentence at the tribunal of Jesus Christ, after having scandalized the great as well as the small, men and women, the rich and the poor, the good and the bad? What repose will you find in hell, where you shall have as many to torment you as you have caused souls to be damned, and where all the scandals you have been guilty of, and thrown defiantly towards Heaven, shall fall like thunder-bolts on your head?

Do penance speedily; do it, if you can, as soon as you have done evil. Ah! miserable soul! all the good that you can do will never equal the evils of which you have been guilty. Make

up, then, by your humility, and by your tears, the defects of your repentance. Repair, by the good example you shall give, the damage you have inflicted on your neighbor. Endeavor to win as many souls to God, as you have taken souls from Him. Let your repentance shed a sweet odor in the hearts of the faithful, in place of the pestilential odors by which your evil acts and wicked life have afflicted them.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Woe to the world because of scandals." *St. Matth.* xviii.

"But he that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea." *St. Matth.* xviii.

"Let your modesty be known to all men: the Lord is nigh." *Philippians*, iv.

"Nevertheless, because thou hast given occasion to the enemy of the Lord to blaspheme, for this thing the child that is born to thee shall surely die." 2 *Kings*, xii.

SECOND WEDNESDAY IN ADVENT.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT AS THE PRECEDING.

1st Point. It is only those who are perfect, in that which they profess to know, who can produce their equals. It is necessary, therefore, to be perfectly wicked, in order to render others like you. The scandalous person is an Anti-Christ, who wages war with the Son of God. He is the tyrant of virtue, whose malice is veiled under an agreeable exterior and a plausible address; the deputy of Satan, the minister of his will, and the corrupter of innocence.

The scandalous person brings destruction into the empire of Jesus Christ, while he extends and establishes that of Lucifer; he fights under the banner of hell; he enlists men by the influence of his evil designs to unite with him; he procures martyrdom for the servants of God, and gives joy and satisfaction to the wicked; he exalts vice to the highest dignity, and reckless of the suffering he has caused, to attain his object, triumphs in injustice.

2d Point. The person who gives scandal causes the damnation of the body and soul of his brethren, which have been purchased

by the body and blood of Jesus Christ. He shall suffer separately for every sin he has committed; he shall be damned as often as he shall have caused the damnation of others; the unspeakable woes of hell will be meted out to him in measure proportioned to the number of souls he has caused to be lost.

Are you one of those who give scandal? have you not given bad example to your children, to your domestics, to your equals, and to your inferiors? are you not free in your language, immodest in your actions, profuse in your expenditures, haughty in your demeanor, ostentatious in your luxury, dissolute and disorderly in your life? do you not behave with irreverence in church? do you assist at the holy sacrifice of Mass with respect and devotion? are you, to all those who know you an example of modesty and piety, or the occasion of sin and scandal?

Oh Lord my God! pardon me my sins, and impute not to me the sins of others. If I am held responsible for the evil which I have committed, and that which I have caused others to commit, my eternal safety is in peril. "Yes, surely," Thou repliest, "for you were created not only for yourself, but for the good of your fellow beings. Your life is not necessary to you, but your good reputation and example are necessary to others, and the world should behold in you a model of chastity and modesty."

3d Point. Alas! my Lord and my God, I have not been pursuing the course thy inspirations have dictated. I have debased modesty, and I have carried a forehead of brass; I have not been ashamed before God or man of the evil I have committed; I have triumphed in my disorders; I have infected many with the pestilence of my filthy conversation—by my shameful actions, by my detestable impiety, by my bad example; I have set snares to entrap the innocent and unwary; I have waged war with thy servants, and, not content with being wicked myself, I have endeavored to make others more wicked than I am. Unhappy wretch that I am! what shall I do in order to repair the evils I have done towards God and my fellow beings? Since, then, I have been, even until now, the tyrant of those who served Thee. My God, it is necessary that I should become, henceforth, the martyr of the wicked; since I have jested at devotion, it is necessary that I should now make an open and fearless profession of it; since I have heretofore worked only for the ruin of souls, it is necessary that I should now only labor to save souls; since I have wasted my days in running after wickedness, it is necessary that I should pursue virtue, and repair the time I have lost, by good works; since I have done the work of devils, it is necessary that I should

now begin to perform that of angels; and I shall not be assured of my safety, until I have been instrumental in saving as many souls as I have caused to be lost.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"And if thine eye scandalize thee, pluck it out, for it is better for thee with one eye to enter into the kingdom of God, than, having two eyes, to be cast into the hell of fire." *St. Mark*, ix.

"It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should scandalize one of these little ones." *St. Luke*, xvii.

"In all things show thyself an example of good works, in doctrine, in integrity, in gravity, the sacred word that cannot be blamed, that he who is on the contrary part may be afraid, having no evil to say of us." *Titus*, ii.

SECOND THURSDAY IN ADVENT.

[St. John imprisoned by Herod.]

Meditation.

ON THE PERSECUTIONS OF THE WICKED.

1st Point. The world persecutes you? Is there no danger of your falling into sin? Have you not abandoned some pious practice? Does not your coldness and indifference need chastisement? Examine yourself.

The wicked persecute you? It is a proof that you belong not to them; they detest those whom God loves. One cannot be pleasing to God and man at the same time; one cannot be loved by the good and the bad. "*If I wish to please men*," says St. Paul, "*I cannot be a servant of God.*" If I am hated by the wicked, it is to be believed that I am loved by Jesus Christ.

2d Point. Persecution drives us to heaven. It strengthens us in our duties; it detaches us from the love of creatures; it preserves us from the delusion of false appearances, and forces us to enter into ourselves; it purifies the heart, as fire purifies gold; it causes goodness to take root in our souls, as fierce winds make the trees strike their roots deep down into the soil; it gives us a distaste for life and a desire for death. Should you have referred all that you are and have to God? should you have sought consolation only in Him, if the world had loved you? Should you

have known the sweetness and clemency of God, if the world had not maltreated you and banished you from its society? It is He who commands them to refuse you with harshness when you ask favors of them and flatter them; to repulse you when you approach them; to fly from you when you seek them.

3d Point. It is God who arms all creatures against you, in order to oblige you to return to Him. He causes thorns to spring over all your pleasures, in order to prevent your reposing thereon; He does not wish any one to offend or wound you, but He wishes you to suffer with patience the injuries which you receive; He does not wish you to sin, but He wishes you to feel the effects of sin; He hates those who persecute, but He dearly loves the persecuted.

Oh my God! thy wisdom is admirable, and thy chastisements are those of a merciful Father. If Thou hadst not warned me, I should never have contended with my enemies; if Thou hadst not hedged my way around with thorns, how should I have been defended from the assaults of those who sought my soul? Alas! I should never have been thine, if the world had desired me; and I should have been adverse to Thee, if the world had not been adverse to me. Oh! I am indebted to its hatred; I am under a weight of obligation to it, for thy love. I praise Thee, my God, for having thus lovingly permitted me to be persecuted! I praise Thee that Thou shouldst have been so mercifully severe. Thou hast broken the fetters by which the world held me in bondage. I was its slave, and Thou hast made me free. I shall henceforth sacrifice to Thee all my life, a victim of love, of praise, and of gratitude.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Fill their faces with shame, O Lord, and they shall seek thy name." *Psalm* lxxxii.

"Lord, they have sought after thee in distress." *Isaias*, xxvi.

"Wherefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and I will stop it up with a wall, and she shall not find her paths." *Osee*, ii.

"Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." *St. Matth.* v.

SECOND FRIDAY IN ADVENT.

[The Gospel is preached to the poor.]

Meditation.

ON POVERTY.

1st Point. Nothing in time can distract the mind or thoughts of a man who is poor in spirit. He desires nothing. If he possesses the necessaries of life, he is contented; if he is without them, he rejoices. A poor and contented man has but few wants. All things are wanting to a rich and avaricious man. Necessity demands but little. Nothing can satisfy avarice.

Are you poor in spirit? Is not your heart filled with heavenly treasures? Do you grieve at beholding the abundance of grace you possess? Do you love indigence and poverty? Are you satisfied with your limited means? Do you not desire more of this world's goods?

2d Point. A man is rich who possesses God. A man is poor indeed when he has lost God. He is avaricious, who is not contented with God. He is happy, who is satisfied with God. Every thing on earth finds place in nothingness. God, alone, can fill the heart which is empty.

3d Point. Are not your goods derived from creatures? Do not the things of this life incessantly occupy you? You shall have every thing if you desire nothing. You shall find every thing when you shall have nothing. Oh, my divine Saviour! Thou hast made this state of poverty desirable, since Thou hast preferred it above all the riches and splendor of Paradise. Can any one be born in more abject poverty, than Thou wert? Can any one live poorer than Thou didst? Can any one die in greater poverty than Thou didst? Thou hast proved that Thou art the Son of God, since Thou hast announced the gospel to the poor. And I, who wish to preach only to the wealthy, and desire only riches, ought I to pass for a child of God? In what strong contrast is thy life to mine! Thou wert rich, and Thou hast made thyself poor; I am poor, and I wish to become rich. Thou hadst all, and Thou hast desired nothing; I have nothing, and I desire every thing. Is it just that a rebellious slave should be better clothed, better treated, and better accommodated than his master?

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Fear not, my son, we lead a poor life indeed, but we shall have many good things if we fear God, and depart from all evil, and do that which is good." *Tobias*, iv.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." *Matt.* v.

"Jesus said to him, If thou wilt be perfect go sell all thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me." *St. Matt.* xix.

"For we brought nothing with us into this world, and certainly we can carry nothing out." 1 *Timothy*, vi.

SECOND SATURDAY IN ADVENT.

Meditation.

ON A GOOD AND BAD CONSCIENCE.

1st Point. St. John, in his prison, is happy; Herod, on his throne, is miserable. How good it is to serve God! What pleasure and tranquillity there is in loving Him! He is benign and merciful to those whose hearts are right, before Him; He is terrible to those who offend and defy Him. A good conscience is calm and at rest; a bad conscience is turbulent and agitated. Peace and repose reign in the soul which belongs to God; trouble and inquietude distract the soul of the wicked.

2d Point. The conscience of the just is a type of heaven, because they are at peace with God, and God dwells with them; that of a sinner is a type of hell, because it can find no rest, and is governed by the spirit of evil. Good men fear nothing; the wicked fear every thing. The just are good in themselves, because their lives are governed by the inspirations of God; the secret motives and hidden life of the sinner, are corrupt and constantly at war with God. The just enter readily into themselves, because all therein is peace and consolation; the wicked dare not enter into themselves, but tremble and fly over the disorder and horrible confusion which reign within them. The just live well amidst the pains and anguish of life, and die with joy; the wicked live in the midst of pleasures, and die in bitter pain and anguish. Rather let me rejoice in the prison of St. John, than be miserable on the throne of Herod. Oh, it is better to be poor and despised in the house of God, than to be prosperous and honored in the

haunts of the wicked! Who would choose to be the guest of the evil one? Who would not fear a host so full of deadly malice? Oh what more miserable condition is there than that of the wicked? Oh what life more happy than that of the Christian? Is it not a foretaste of heaven to be always contented? Is it not a foretaste of hell to be always disquieted and angry?

3d Point. How is it with you? Do you live in peace? Do you live in turmoil and disorder? Whence comes your sadness? Is it from being tempted by vain scruples? Be obedient, and you shall soon be healed. Is it because life is fleeting and uncertain? Make a good confession, and your soul will find peace. Is it because your affairs are in a ruinous state? One is miserable, because he believes himself to be so, or desires to be so. Think of the great affair of your eternal safety, and you will no longer be disquieted. Is it because you cannot obtain all that you desire? Desire nothing, and no disappointment will have power to afflict you. Is it because you are wanting in devotion? True devotion consists in doing that which God desires you to do, and in being that which He desires you to be; to suffer that which He desires you to suffer, and to remain, without murmuring, in that state in which it is his good pleasure for you to remain.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that worketh evil." *Romans*, ii.

"My sin is always before me." *Psalm* l.

"There is no peace to the wicked, saith the Lord." *Isaias*, xlviii.

"A good conscience is a continual feast." *Proverbs*, xv.

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

The Gospel. *John*, i. 19–28.

"At that time the Jews sent from Jerusalem priests and Levites to John, to ask him: Who art thou? And he confessed and did not deny; and he confessed: I am not the Christ. And they asked him: What then? Art thou Elias? And he said: I am not. Art thou a prophet? And he answered: No. They said, therefore, unto him: Who art thou, that we may give an answer to them that sent us? What sayest thou of thyself? He said: I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaias. And they that

were sent were of the Pharisees, and they asked and said to him: Why, then, dost thou baptize, if thou be not Christ, nor Elias, nor the prophet? John answered them, saying: I baptize with water but there hath stood one in the midst of you whom you know not. The same is He that shall come after me, who is preferred before me, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose. These things were done in Bethania, beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing."

Meditation.

ON THE KNOWLEDGE OF ONESELF.

1st Point. Who art Thou, my God, and who am I? Thou art all, and I am nothing; Thou knowest all, and I am ignorant of every thing; Thou canst do all, and I can do nothing; Thou art all light, and I am all darkness; Thou art mighty and strong, I am infirm and weak; Thou art all sanctity, I am all wickedness; Thou art the holy of holies, I am the sinner of sinners; Thou art the king of kings, I am the slave of slaves; Thou art the source of all my good, and the remedy of all my evils; Thou art my life, my joy, my wisdom, my strength, my defence, my desire, my consolation, my hope! Oh Lord, in Thee is all my strength; without Thee I am impotent and helpless.

2d Point. Who are you, man of pride and haughtiness? What have you that you have not received from God? And if you have received all from Him, why desire to elevate yourself above others? Can you have a good thought which is not inspired by God? Can you conceive a good desire unaided by his grace? Can you form a good resolution unless He suggests it? Can you utter a good word, or perform a good action, without the assistance of his grace? Alas! why is it, then, that you do not have recourse to Almighty God? Why do you not implore Him to instruct, strengthen, and defend you? Why do you not humiliate yourself in his presence? Why is it that you rely only on your own will, on your own prudence, on your own credit and friends? Why so presumptuous as to depend only on your virtues and merits, as if you could put Him aside, or He could pass you by?

3d Point. Who are you? A man who has been placed in the world only to glorify God; a sinner who has merited hell a thousand times; a Christian who ought to be crucified; one of the predestined, who ought to desire suffering, if he desires eternal life! Alas, why is it that you think only of glorifying yourself instead of glorifying God? Why is it that you wish to avoid doing penance in this life, since you deserve to suffer in hell?

Why is it, that being a Christian, you would shun the cross, and murmur when God afflicts you? Why is it that you desire to go to heaven by some other road than that by which all the saints have gone?

What were you at your birth? What are you in your life? What shall you be in your death? Why then do you allow yourself to be persuaded into sin? Why prefer yourself to those whose worth and virtue render them superior to you? Why despise your fellow men? Why hate your neighbor? Why vainly plume yourself on advantages which you do not possess, or if you do, which you have received from God, who can deprive you of them when it pleases Him, and for which He will require a strict account at death, and in judgment.

Oh man without reason! Oh sinner without fear! Oh Christian without faith! Do you take more delight in emulating the pride of Lucifer than the humility of Jesus Christ? Remember, that which you have is not of yourself, nor should it be the occasion of vain-glory. Remember, that which you have of yourself is perishable, sinful and fleeting, and should teach you humility. If you elevate yourself, God will cast you down. If you practice humility, God will raise you up.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Humble thy spirit very much, for the vengeance on the flesh of the ungodly is fire and worms." *Eccles.* vii.

"Come unto me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. Take up my yoke upon your shoulders and learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find refreshment for your souls." *Matt.* xi.

"But it is not so among you, but whosoever will be greater shall be your minister. And whoever will be first among you, shall be the servant of all." *Mark*, x.

"Because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." *St. Luke*, xiv.

THIRD MONDAY IN ADVENT.

Meditation.

ON HUMILITY.

1st Point. What will it profit your soul to possess all other virtues, if you have not the virtue of humility? Without humility

they will not save you. All of your sins, with all the corrupt evils of your nature will not damn you, if you have humility; for it banishes every vice from the heart, and invites all the virtues to enter therein. If, wicked as king Achab, you will fly from yourself, and humiliate yourself, you shall, like him, obtain mercy; but if as rich and beautiful as Lucifer, you fly from yourself, and still cherish a proud and haughty spirit, like him, you will be eternally damned! God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble. What can you do without his grace? It is necessary to be truly humble to obtain it. Those who are proud and haughty shall not receive it; those who are devout and humble shall obtain it in rich measure.

2D POINT. Who can say that his salvation is impossible, when he knows that humility will obtain from God all the necessary graces to ensure it? Who can say that the road to heaven is difficult and rough, since He who brings down the pride of his spirit, can easily ascend it? You cannot raise yourself to the heights of perfection, but who is it that cannot humble himself? All men cannot ascend, but who is there that cannot descend? All things are possible to you, if you can practice humility. You cannot fast, but you can humiliate yourself. You cannot weep for your sins, but you can humiliate yourself for those things which you are not able to weep for. You cannot perform many works of charity, or recite many prayers, but you can always humiliate yourself. The virtue of humility repairs the defects of charity. A sinner is safe when folded in the arms of humility. God never despises a contrite and humble heart.

3D POINT. Let us not lose courage, my soul. Why should we despair of the mercy of God? Why abandon ourselves to sorrow, and consume ourselves with anger and disquiet? We have only to humble ourselves before God, and we shall obtain all those graces which we have not, and become all that we are not, and receive all that assistance which we do not merit.

Do you relapse often into sin? Have patience, and humiliate yourself. You cannot pray, because you are assailed by distractions of every kind. Be patient in the bosom of humility. Your infirmities are without number? your defects seem incurable? If you can do nothing else to remedy these evils, humiliate yourself. The virtue of humility, says that holy man, St. Bernard, repairs the breaches, and heals the wounds inflicted on charity by our sins.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"He hath had regard to the prayers of the humble, and He hath not despised their petition." *Psalm.* ci.

"In thy humiliation keep patience, for silver and gold are tried in the fire, but acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation." *Eccles.* ii.

"The greater thou art, humble thyself the more in all things, and thou shalt find grace before God." *Eccles.* iii.

"For great is the power of God alone, and He is honored by the humble." *Ibid.*

THIRD TUESDAY IN ADVENT.

Meditation.

ON THE PRACTICE OF HUMILITY.

1st Point. It is necessary to suffer the contempt of the world, and be despised by the enemies of God; it is necessary to love contempt; it is necessary to desire it; it is salutary to seek it. It is necessary to suffer it, because it is an imaginary evil; it is necessary to love it, because it adds to our merits; it is necessary to desire it, because it provides us with occasions for augmenting our spiritual good; it is salutary to desire it, because it perfects us in the inestimable virtue of humility, without which we cannot triumph over sin and death.

2d Point. Conceal your treasures in the bosom of humility, for fear the devil should take them from you. Nature guards for herself that which is of value, and rejects that which is worth less. Hide then your virtues, and reject your vices. Destroy the insidious poison of dangerous defects, by that sure antidote, humility. It is dangerous to speak much of yourself, either of your goodness, or your defects. If you reveal the good that is in you, it is to appear holy; if you deplore the evil, it is to seem humble. It is necessary to love those innocent defects in ourselves, which cause us confusion, and animate our humility. It is necessary to love, generally, all which keeps us in a state of abjection. Our centre is the unworthiness of our own nothingness. It is here we ought to fly—it is here we ought to remain—it is here we ought to repose.

To be ostentatious in your piety, is a dangerous, a perilous thing; but to appear pious and virtuous when you are not so in

reality, is a vicious hypocrisy. To be possessed of the grace and love of God, and to hold, unseen by men, all the treasures of a hidden life is, of all these conditions, the most holy and advantageous.

What opinion have you of yourself? What do you think of others? Do you speak well of yourself? Do you speak well of others? Do you take pleasure in being seen and admired? Do you seek grandeur, and desire riches? Do you fly from contempt? Do you shrink from confession? Are you envious of the fortune or advantage of others? Do you seek to impair the glory of your rivals, or degrade them in the estimation of your fellow mortals? Are you proud, passionate, and irritable? Do you give yourself any trouble or concern about your defects, and imperfections? Are you afraid of the opinions of men? You are then base and haughty. You are vain and ambitious. You have the spirit of Lucifer, and not that of Jesus Christ.

Oh, Jesus my Saviour, how can I esteem humility and despise the humiliations which attend it? How can I acquire this essential virtue unless I improve every occasion that offers to humiliate myself? Give me this virtue, oh Lord, if Thou withholdest all else. Though it should cost me all the houses and goods which I possess in this life, I submit willingly to be deprived of them, if Thou wilt bestow on me the grace to love contempt, or, at least, to suffer it with patience, that I may possess Thee in heaven, where I shall never enter if I am not humble in heart and soul.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Why doth thy spirit swell against God, to utter such words out of thy mouth." *Job*, xv.

"And said, Amen, I say unto you, unless you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." *Matt.* xviii.

"For if a man think himself to be something, wherein he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." *Galatians*, vi.

"Be you humble, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in the time of visitation." 1 *Peter*, v.

"And do you all insinuate humility, one to another, for God resisteth the proud, and giveth his grace to the humble." *Ibid.*

THIRD WEDNESDAY IN ADVENT.

[On the opinion that the Jews had of St. John the Baptist, and the contempt they showed him.]

Meditation.

ON THE VAIN JUDGMENTS OF MEN.

1st Point. Have you determined to remain always in bondage to the opinions of men? Will you never learn to despise human respect? Will you never have courage to declare yourself only for God? Will you never renounce the ostentation, and vain trappings of earth? When will you approach, and frequent the sacraments? When will you forsake those evil associates? When will you embrace a life of devotion? When will you place yourself under those holy influences which demand chastity and modesty? When will you declare yourself a Christian?

2d Point. "The world will mock at you?" say you. You have more cause to mock at yourself, than it has. Do you not know that the world is the greatest enemy of God; that it is the tyrant of religion, and the persecutor of the innocent? Have you not renounced its friendship at the baptismal font? Why, then, do you still fear to displease it? If you do not wish to renounce the friendship of the world, it is necessary that you should renounce that of Jesus Christ. What baseness to make yourself a slave to the opinions of men! What infidelity to forsake Jesus Christ for the wicked! What treason, to join the ranks of his enemies! What impiety, to blush at his gospel! Are you not one of these base, one of these impious, one of these treacherous and unfaithful men?

3d Point. Oh, my God! How many years I have served thy foes! How long a time, I have been the slave of the world! But it is done. I desire to escape from them, and devote myself entirely to thy divine service. I wish to commence at once a Christian life, and openly profess the faith of Christ. Retire from me, ye wicked, for I am resolved to keep inviolably the commandments of God. The first virtue of a Christian, says St. Jerome, is to despise, and be despised; to despise the world, and be despised by the world.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"If I did yet please men, I should not be the servant of Christ." *Galatians*, i.

"But as to me, it is a thing of the least account to be judged by you, or by human judgment, neither do I judge myself." 1 *Corinthians*, iv.

"Be not ashamed of any of these things, and accept no person to sin thereby." *Eccles.* xlii.

THIRD THURSDAY IN ADVENT.

Meditation.

ON THE CONTEMPT WE OUGHT TO SHOW FOR THE JUDGMENTS OF MEN.

1st Point. If men deride you, it is a testimony of your merit. I should believe you worthy of blame if you enjoyed the approbation only of those who approve of nothing but that which ought to be condemned. The judgment of the impious is not the law which should govern Christians.

Is it necessary to give up the pursuit of wisdom, for fear of displeasing fools? What right have the wicked to prescribe obligations for you? Who has made you subject to them? Who has given them a right to your allegiance? Are you afraid of being defamed by the infamous? Do you fear being dishonored by those who are devoid of honor?

2d Point. The wicked condemn you? A sentence is null which is pronounced without authority; it is unjust, when he who condemns merit deserves himself to be condemned. Is it marvellous that a man should speak evil, who is acquainted with no good? If the tongue of the impious accuse you, let your good works only reply to them. The contempt of the wicked is the best defence of the good, and the panegyric of their virtues.

3d Point. Oh, Jesus, my Lord! Thou hast but few disciples on earth. Thou hast but few servants who fear, and who love Thee, as Thou desirest to be loved and feared. I see on every hand the tyrants of Christianity, but I find no martyrs. Those few words: '*What will they say?*' make more apostates than Nero or Dioclesian did. Alas! how will they suffer blows of iron, who cannot endure blows inflicted by the tongue? How can

those become martyrs of faith, who do not wish to be martyrs of charity?

For me, my God and my Saviour, I will never blush at thy Gospel. I shall profess openly, and fearlessly, that I am thy servant. I shall never again feel unhappy, for fear of displeasing those who displease Thee. On the contrary, I shall esteem it a great honor to be despised by those who despise Thee, and a singular pleasure to be hated by those who love Thee not.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"He that feareth man shall quickly fall." *Prov.* xxix.

"And I say to you, my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do." *St. Luke*, xii.

"Perfect charity casteth out fear." 1 *St. John*, iv.

"And who is he that can hurt you, if you be zealous of good? And be not afraid of their trouble, and be not troubled." 1 *Pet.* iii.

THIRD FRIDAY IN ADVENT.

[On the patience of John in prison.]

Meditation.

PATIENCE.

1st Point. All the sufferings of your life combined, are nothing in comparison with the pains which you merit; in comparison with the recompense which is prepared for you; in comparison with the evils which you have committed; in comparison with the good which you have omitted; in comparison with that which Jesus has suffered; in comparison with that which all the saints have endured! If you are without the cross you are not a disciple of Jesus Christ; if you do not carry your cross after Him, you shall not reign with Him. It is necessary to suffer in time, or in eternity; in this life, or after death; on earth, or in hell. One cannot pass from temporal delights to eternal delights; from temporal joys to eternal happiness. He passes from delight to suffering; from happiness to misery eternal. Consider well the choice before you; the cross here, or everlasting anguish hereafter.

2d Point. When you suffer with patience, you suffer with Jesus

Christ. He reigns and abides in you; you are the victim of his love, the throne of his grace, the trophy of his victory.

If you acquit yourself of all your duties, you will amass great treasures; if you practice all the virtues, you are undermining the roots of all the evils which poison your heart; you are doing the work of the predestined; you are sure of your safety, and will avoid the pains of purgatory, and the eternal pangs of hell, and be received into the paradise of God.

3D POINT. Oh my God and my Father, how shall I distinguish the evil from the good which Thou dost send me. I esteem myself miserable when I am loaded with thy favors! I murmur against Thee when Thou givest me the most sensible marks of thy love! Thou dost treat me as Thou didst thy divine Son, whom Thou didst send into the world, not to live in ease and delights, but to labor in suffering, and die in unspeakable pain. After this, what is there on earth which should possess the power to wound me? Dare I complain of sufferings, since Jesus Christ has suffered all for me? Henceforth, oh my Saviour, I will love and esteem sufferings, because thou hast consecrated them by thy bitter passion; since they are the wages of thy love; since they are the continuation of thy pains and the relics of thy cross; since they are the most certain marks of the predestined, and the conditions without which I cannot be saved. I find consolation in my grief, when I meditate on thy passion; I no longer complain of my cross, when I think of thine.

To suffer and die is the life of the predestined. To die without having suffered is the death of the reprobate; to suffer, and endure your anguish in silence, is the height of virtue—it is the inexhaustible depth of merit.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"For patience is necessary for you, that, doing the will of God you may receive the promise." *Hebrews*, x.

"For I reckon that sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us." *Romans*, viii.

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." *St. Matt.* xvi.

"Take all that shall be brought upon you." *Eccles.* ii.

"Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow his steps." 1 *Peter*, ii.

THIRD SATURDAY IN ADVENT.

Meditation.

ON THE EXERCISE OF PATIENCE.

1st Point. Since it is necessary to suffer in this world, we do not lose the fruit of our sufferings. Suffer for Jesus; suffer with Jesus; suffer that which Jesus suffered.

2d Point. Suffer without complaint and without murmuring; suffer with strength and constancy; suffer—suffer with joy and love; suffer all things, and from all persons; suffer at all times, and in all places; suffer all kinds of miseries with submission; endure all injuries with resignation; bear the cross, adore the cross, seek the cross.

3d Point. Is it thus that you suffer? Do you not complain? do you not murmur? do you meekly bear all things? do you suffer always? do you suffer from all the world? do you love your cross? at least do you carry it with patience? Oh holy cross, I adore and embrace thee. Since I am a Christian, I am a child of the cross, and I will die with the cross in my arms. Thou art the tree of life; thou art the asylum of sinners, and the consolation of the afflicted. It is from the cross that I expect my salvation, since without it I cannot be saved.

O my God! henceforth I desire to glory only in suffering; henceforth it will be my greatest cross to live without the cross; the highest aim of my devotion shall be to remain silent in suffering, and joyful under the burden of the cross.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Woe to them that have lost patience." *Eccles.* ii.

"Take all that shall be brought upon you." *Ibid.*

"Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow his steps." 1 *Peter*, ii.

"For this is thankworthy, if for conscience towards God a man endure sorrow, suffering wrongfully." 1 *Peter*, ii.

"Be patient towards all men." 1 *Thessalonians*, v.

"We glory also in tribulation; knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience trial, and trial hope." *Romans*, v.

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

Luke, iii. 1–6.

"Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, (Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod tetrarch of Galilee, and Philip, his brother, tetrarch of Iturea, and the country of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilina, under the high-priests Annas and Caiphas,) the word of the Lord came to John, the son of Zachary, in the desert. And he came into all the country about the Jordan, preaching the baptism of penance for the remission of sins, as it was written in the book of the words Isaias the prophet: 'A voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make straight His paths; every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways plain,' and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

Meditation.

ON THE BAPTISM OF PENANCE.

1st Point. The baptism of water, washes away from the souls of children the stain of original sin; baptism of blood, washes away every stain from the souls of martyrs; baptism of the heart cleanses the souls of all penitents. Penance is a baptism, which effaces their sins—which effaces them all—which effaces them forever.

One can receive the baptism of water only once, but that of penance can be repeated, and received an infinite number of times. Oh, tidings of consolation to poor sinners! Oh, we are worthy of chastisement if we abuse so great a grace, so inestimable a privilege, and make subservient to sin the only remedy for sin.

2d Point. Do you sin often? Do you sin grievously? Alas, it is an evil and perilous thing to sin against the living God, but yield not to despair: if you are sincerely repentant for having sinned, penance will efface your guilt. Have you continued long in sin? Have you despised the treasures of the goodness of God? Have you presumed to treat his patience with contempt? to continue in sin, and insult the holiness of his life by the evils of yours? The mercy of God is infinite, but its designs are not.

Justice succeeds mercy, and from our wanton abuse of it, draws vengeance which will be insupportable yet eternal. But abandon not yourself to despair, although a salutary fear should possess you; you can be saved even at the hour of your death. Repentance is never too late, if, when it comes, it is true and sincere. There is no sin, however enormous may be its guilt, which cannot be effaced by the baptism of penance.

3D POINT. God does not command me to perform impossibilities; to be more merciful and perfect than Himself. He commands me to forgive all the injuries I have ever received, and He will pardon me all the injuries I have ever done Him; all the sins I have ever committed against his love, his patience, his mercy. He commands me to forgive them from my heart, without pretence or dissimulation, if I desire to be entirely forgiven by Him. He commands me to pardon all my enemies at all times, and even unto death. He pardons them all their sins, and at all times, as long as they have life for repentance. He commands me not only to forgive, but to forget those injuries which I have received, and to abstain from all thoughts or acts of revenge after I have pardoned them. He will then forget all those sins for which we have done penance, and will not punish twice the criminal thoughts and acts which we have committed against his divine majesty; otherwise He would command us to be more holy and merciful than Himself.

If God had not left you this salutary plank of repentance, how could you be saved after shipwreck? how preserve yourself from the abyss of hell, or reach the friendly shore of his mercy? If there were only one priest in the world, where, or to whom, would you go for absolution? Rejoice, then, that there are many, and, if they find it necessary to administer to your sick soul the nauseous medicine of severe penances, receive it, perform the conditions however difficult they may be; or neglect and omit them, and find eternal suffering, eternal loss. If death should surprise you at this instant, what would be the destiny of your soul?

Chant, then, all your life, this beautiful canticle of David: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and let all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and never forget all that He has done for thee. Who forgiveth all thy iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases. Who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with mercy and compassion. Who satisfieth thy desires with good things, and reneweth thy youth like the eagle's."

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Lord, how often shall my brother offend against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus said unto him, I say not to thee till seven times, but till seventy times seven." *St. Matt.* xviii.

"I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his ways and live." *Ezechiel*, xxxiii.

"Your God is good, and his mercy endureth forever, and He will not turn his face from you, if you return to Him." 2 *Paralipomenon*, vii.

"Be converted, therefore, ye sinners, and do justice before God, believing that He will show his mercy to you." *Tobias*, xiii.

"But Thou hast mercy upon all because Thou canst do all things, and overlookest the sins of men, for the sake of repentance." *Wisdom*, xi.

FOURTH MONDAY IN ADVENT.

Meditation.

CONVERSION OUGHT NOT TO BE DELAYED.

1st Point. It is impossible for you to be saved unless you do penance. If you defer it, you may never be able to do it. The time that you have now, will not be always yours. The grace of contrition, which has touched your heart to-day, may never visit it again. The good resolutions which suggest themselves to you now, may never return. He who abuses time, will be deprived of time; he who abuses the grace of God, will be deprived of grace; he who abuses his freedom, will be deprived of freedom.

2d Point. You say continually, that you desire to change your life? and yet you take no steps towards doing so! For many years, you have been promising God that you would correct this vice, and forsake those evil associates who are prejudicial to your eternal interests. That you would throw off this lukewarmness, and sloth, which cause your soul to revolt against the Son of God; that you would be more patient, more modest, more devoted to his service; more faithful to all the exercises of piety, more gentle, more liberal, and more charitable towards your neighbor. Where are these changes? Why defer your conversion another day? Is it just, that you should be wicked because God is good?

How can you dare, O sinner, to make his patience serve your impiety, and render his justice the slave of your malice?

3D POINT. Sinning on in the hope of eventual pardon, is to sin through presumption. It is to protect and cherish an evil by the grace which ought to destroy it; it is to nourish and strengthen the sin, by the antidote which ought to destroy it; it is to make repentance the depth of impenitence.

O my God! what abuse, what malice, what ingratitude I have exhibited towards Thee! I confess that I no longer merit that which I have so wantonly abused. I can well conceive that thy goodness is infinite, by the patience with which Thou hast borne all my derelictions! Oh, my Lord and Saviour, wait yet a little longer, for it is the earnest desire of my soul to be truly converted to Thee. But no—wait no longer on me. It is not just that I should continue to weary thy patience. I wish to do penance this day, this hour, this moment, without deferring it until to-morrow. How do I know but that to-morrow shall find me in eternity? How do I know that the grace which I now have will abide with me until to-morrow? Where may not these resolutions have flown before to-morrow?

Yes, my God! my resolution is made. I will begin from this moment to change my life. Time seems too short, to repair the evils which I have committed. Hasten, then, my soul, to lave in the baptism of penance: time is fleeting, life draws towards its close, and death is inevitable.

Do you know the measure of your days, that you waste them in sloth? If you do not do penance in time, you will wish in vain to do it in eternity.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and patience, and long-suffering? Knowest thou not that the benignity of God leadeth thee to penance?" *Romans*, ii.

"Repent, therefore, and be converted that your sins may be blotted out." *Acts*, iii.

"Delay not to be converted to God, and defer it not from day to day." *Eccles.* v.

"Delay not to be converted to God; for his wrath will come on a sudden, and in the time of vengeance He will destroy thee." *Eccles.* v.

FOURTH TUESDAY IN ADVENT.

Meditation.

ON THE DELAY OF PENANCE.

1st Point. One dies as he has lived. He carries with him into the world beyond the grave all the evil principles and wicked inclinations of his nature. Is it possible to hate in a moment those things which one has always loved? Is it possible to love in a moment that God whom one has always hated and offended? The conclusion of one's life corresponds with the nature of the principles which have animated it. If one has been governed by evil principles, his last end, without a miracle, will be miserable.

2d Point. Do you not rely on these arguments? God bestows his grace on his creatures when it pleases Him, and reveals his justice in chastisements, to keep them in hope, and restrain them by fear. Are you the subject of his grace? Can you hold back the arm of his justice? He promises you pardon if you do penance, but He does not promise you to-day or to-morrow, in order to do it. Why postpone until to-morrow that which ought to be done to-day? That which is good to-morrow, is it not also good to-day? Is it right, is it safe, to found on a *perhaps* the great affair of your salvation? Perhaps you will have time; perhaps you will not. A malefactor was saved from despair at the last moment of his life; but presume not, there was only one to whom the grace of penance was given.

3d Point. You say that nothing hurries you, and I say that every thing hurries you. Time, which is passing, and which will never return; grace which inspires you, but which may never revisit you; paradise, which is open for you to-day, but which may be closed to-morrow; death, which pursues you closely; hell, into which you will fall; the judgment which approaches, where you will have to give a strict account of your whole life: all these hurry you, all these urge you, and oblige you to do penance without procrastinating it another day.

Oh my God! it is a dangerous thing to postpone doing that, which is of such importance and ought to be done at once. It is dreadful to continue doing those things which ought never to have been done. My life is all thine, and yet I presume to offer Thee only a portion of it. Thou hast given me time, that I may love and serve Thee; is it just that I should employ that time in

offending Thee? Oh more wicked sacrifice than that of Cain, who offered the price of his flocks to God! Do I not deserve the same malediction which fell on him, if I give the first fruits, and the best part of my life to the devil, and the weak remnant of it to God? Oh! we cannot be too careful when the gain or loss of a blessed eternity depends on what we do.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Repent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." *Acts*, iii.

"For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven, against all impiety and injustice of those men that declare the truth of God in injustice." *Romans*, i.

"The man that with a stiff neck despiseth Him that reproveth Him, shall suddenly be destroyed." *Proverbs*, xxix.

FOURTH WEDNESDAY IN ADVENT.

Meditation.

ON THE FIRST CONDITION OF TRUE PENANCE. TO PREPARE US FOR THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST.

1st Point. Penance, to be true, must come from the heart. As it is the heart which conceives the evil we do, it is the heart which should scourge and destroy it. It is that which takes us from God; it ought to be that which should lead us back to Him. Hatred of evil proceeds from the love of virtue, and measures itself by the greatness of love. One hates the evil which he has loved, and hates it in the same proportion as he has before loved it. I love one thing and hate another, and my love is governed by the strength of my hate. I then hate sin as much as I ought to love God; as much as I love myself; as much as I ought to fear hell; as much as I ought to desire paradise. As I love only God, I hate only sin. As I love the pursuit of virtue through God, who is the only object of my love, I hate and fear all that approaches evil, through sin, which ought to be the only object of my abhorrence. I ought to love God above all things; I ought to hate sin above all things. If I surpass all others in the love of God, so ought I to exceed all others in a hatred for sin, since it ought to be the object of my detestation, as much as God is the object of my love.

2d Point. What have you done up to the present time? Is the sorrow which you have conceived for your sins true and sincere? Are you not one of those of whom God complains; that they love Him with their lips, while their hearts are far away from Him? If your contrition had been sincere, would you have fallen into this or that great sin as often as your heart conceived it? Who can believe that you have hated it above all the imaginable evils of sin, when you become so quickly reconciled to it, after declaring that you detest it, and renewing your friendship with it more strongly and intimately than before? The second fall is not a certain sign that your contrition was not sincere; but when it is frequent, and you relapse often into sins which can destroy the life of the soul, you are in peril, and have much reason to be afraid.

3d Point. Oh my God! I have a wicked heart. It is proud; it is deceitful. Alas! I fear I have deceived myself. Until now, I have deluded myself with the idea that I hated sin, when in reality I secretly fostered and encouraged it. My heart is always engaged in listening to the suggestions of thy enemy, whose plausible excuses reconcile me to my sins. I see plainly that I have never broken entirely with them, since I am constantly being reconciled to them.

Oh my God! from this moment I wish to change my life. I ardently wish Jesus Christ to be born in my heart. Oh my Father! Thou knowest that it is good for me to love Thee; that I detest sin and hold it in abhorrence. I hate it from my heart; I hate it from the bottom of my heart; I hate it with all my heart; I hate it as the greatest of all evils, because it can separate me from Thee, the greatest of all good!

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"And they loved Him with their mouth, but their heart was not right with Him." *Psalm* lxxvii.

"And after all this, her treacherous sister Juda hath not returned to me with her whole heart, but with falsehood, saith the Lord." *Jeremias*, iii.

"Now, therefore, saith the Lord, be converted to me with all your heart, in fasting, and in weeping, and in mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, patient and rich in mercy, and ready to repent of the evil." *Joel*, ii.

FOURTH THURSDAY IN ADVENT.

Meditation.

ON THE SECOND CONDITION OF TRUE PENANCE.

1st Point. Penance without a detestation of mortal sin is null and void. Grace effaces none, if it does not efface all. You cannot half reconcile yourself with God. You cannot be at the same time in a state of grace, and a state of sin. You cannot be the friend and the enemy of God, at the same time; worthy of his love, and of his hatred, meriting paradise, and deserving hell; the child of God, and the child of the devil. He who does not believe all the dogmas of faith cannot believe one, through motives of faith; he who does not hate all his sins, does not hate one, through motives of repentance. If you hate one sin because you know it is displeasing to God, why not detest the others which are also abhorrent to Him? To be a child of the Church it is necessary to believe all the truths of faith; to be a child of God it is necessary to hate all the sins which are contrary to his law.

2d Point. Saul was faithless; when, going forth at the command of God to destroy a wicked and idolatrous nation, he made an exception, and spared the life of a king whom he should have slain, it was the cause of his losing all, in time and in eternity. He became the enemy of God because he spared the enemy of God. Of what use will it be, if you conquer a hundred sins and remain the slave of one. Of what avail will it be to you to detest your angry and passionate ways, if you continue to be the slave of impurity. It requires only one mortal blow to deprive the body of life; only one mortal sin is required to destroy the life of the soul.

3d Point. Examine your conscience, and see if your repentance, even up to the present time, has not been imperfect. Do you abhor all your sins? Have you not some cherished secret sin? Have you not some favorite sin which possesses your heart, and which you cannot resolve to destroy? How many times have you not indulged in this sin? How many times have you not promised to forsake it? Is it not a predominant passion? If you were not subject to this sin, you say, you could be a saint. I agree with you, but as long as you remain its slave, you will be as a reprobate.

Do penance. Drive away from your heart the enemies of God; they should not tarry an instant in the place where you wish Jesus Christ to come. Break all those fetters which have so long held you in bondage to the devil. Slay this king of the Amalekites; kill this predominant sin, and regard it as the most dangerous enemy you have. Oh Lord, I desire freedom from all sin; but I have so little strength, aid me by thy grace, and do Thou thyself drive from my heart all thy enemies. I am resolved to die or to destroy my sins, to lose life or to love Thee.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan tempted thy heart, that thou shouldst lie to the Holy Ghost, and by fraud keep part of the price of the field." *Acts*, v.

"For if you believe me not, you shall die in your sins." *St. John*, viii.

"Cast away from you all your transgressions and make to yourselves a new heart and a new spirit; and why will you die, O house of Israel?" *Ezechiel.* xviii.

"He that hideth his sins shall not prosper, but he that shall confess and forsake them shall obtain mercy." *Prov.* xxviii.

FOURTH FRIDAY IN ADVENT.

Meditation.

THIRD CONDITION OF TRUE PENANCE.

1st Point. A man is not truly penitent who desires to be so only for a season. It is necessary always to hate the evil, which is always hated by God. Does he really break all bonds of friendship with the enemy of his being, who has a design of renewing them on the first opportunity? Is it, to hate with all the heart a sin which one is still willing to commit? He has not true contrition who only feels some contrition for his sins. As he can really hate it, without feeling true hatred, he can also feel sorry, without having true sorrow. He only hates it truly who resolves to destroy it. Is this your resolution? Have you always resolved to destroy those sins, which separate you from God?

2d Point. If one does not fly the occasions of sin, he is not resolved to forsake it. He who loves the cause, loves the effect. He who loves the danger, perishes therein. It is not enough to

hate all sin; it is necessary to repair the injuries it has caused; to restore ill-gotten goods; to contradict the slanders by which one has damaged the reputation of his neighbor; repair the scandal he has given, make satisfaction to all whom he has offended, become reconciled to his enemy, not only in speech and appearance, but in effect and in heart. It is necessary to be revenged on one's self, and punish, by grief, the pleasure we have taken in offending God, who has transferred to repentance the right He possesses, to punish sin; if penance spares it, the justice of God will not spare it, if it is punished by penance, his justice will not pursue it.

3d Point. Is it thus that you have done penance? Have you sincerely hated your sin? Have you hated it universally? Have you hated it constantly? Do you hold in possession the goods of another? Have you not injured the reputation of your neighbor? Have you not given scandal? What have you done to repair it? What pleasures have you deprived your body of, in order to punish it for the criminal pleasure it has indulged in? What grief have you felt? The guilt of criminal pleasure is expiated by grief. You will suffer in eternity as many torments as you have known delights in time, unless you do penance.

Oh God of my soul! I know not the state I am in. Am I in thy grace, or under thy displeasure? I know that I have committed innumerable sins, but I know not that any of them have been pardoned. There is in penance something that can give me a little certainty, but I have not repented yet. At least that which I have done appears to me imperfect and uncertain. My relapses have equalled my confessions. I do not perceive any amendment in my life. What shall I do? It is necessary to repair the defects of all preceding confessions, to change my life, to fly all occasions of sin, and execute vengeance on those already committed.

I will hasten without delay to my spiritual director, lay open to him the wants of my soul, implore his counsel, and submit to whatever course his discretion suggests.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"They forgot his works." *Psalm* cv.

"As much as she hath glorified herself, and hath been in delicacies, so much torment and sorrow give unto her." *Apocalypse*, xviii.

"The kingdom of Heaven is at hand." *St. Matt.* iii.

DAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS.

Meditation.

ON THE NECESSARY DISPOSITIONS TO RECEIVE OUR DIVINE SAVIOUR.

1st Point. That Jesus Christ may be born in our hearts, it is necessary to prepare them for his reception by penance. It is necessary to drive away the evil spirits which possess them, by a good and sincere confession. Jesus and Satan cannot remain together in one soul; the light and darkness, the truth and the untruth, sanctity and malice, cannot be allied. If your soul is guilty of some mortal sin, if it is the slave of some wicked habit, if it is engaged in the proximate and dangerous occasions of sin, if it is filled with the esteem and affection of the world, Jesus cannot be born there; He will go and lodge in a stable.

2d Point. That Jesus Christ may be born in our hearts, it is necessary to humiliate ourselves. "*When He comes*," says St. John, "*the valleys shall be filled up, and the mountains laid low.*" God resists the proud, and gives his grace to the humble. Jesus, who is the author of grace, will not be born in your soul if pride reigns there. Mary obtained Him by her virginity, but she conceived Him by her humility. He wished to be born, not in the royal city of Jerusalem, but in the little town of Bethlehem; not in a palace, but in a stable. He did not manifest himself to haughty Herod, but to poor shepherds.

3d Point. That Jesus Christ may be born in our hearts, it is necessary to be at peace with God, and tranquil in our conscience. It is necessary to make straight the crooked ways, and smooth that which is rough and uneven. The effects of his coming, and the dispositions proper to receive Him, are sweetness and peace. At the hour of his birth peace reigned on earth; the angels chanted a canticle of peace when they announced it; "*He has*," says David, "*established his kingdom in peace.*" If, then, you desire to receive Him, you must calm the tumult of your feelings, repress all angry emotions, banish all evil passions, invite peace to reign in your heart, peace with God, peace with your neighbor, peace with yourself. Alas! how can I hope to receive the God of peace, I who have sinned daily and have refused to do penance; I who am so proud, so distrustful, so arrogant, so ambitious; I who am always agitated by my passions; who am so hasty and impatient; I who am so continually in difficulties, and

who render myself so disagreeable to all around me, by my wicked humors; I who have no amiability or mildness, and who will not suffer the smallest evil from another.

Oh, Saviour of the world, who hast come to give peace to mankind, give it to my poor soul, which has long sought it, but cannot find it among creatures; command the winds to abate and the sea to be still, then there shall be a calm in my soul; Thou who didst command thy disciples, when they entered into a house, to invoke peace on all who dwelt therein, refuse not thy peace to me, when Thou shalt enter into my heart to-morrow. To obtain it I will fly to the tribunal of penance, that I may be cleansed of all my sins; I will humiliate my spirit, I will long for thy coming, and sigh to participate in the joys of thy birth.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Rejoice in the Lord always; I say again rejoice. Let your modesty be known to all men." *Philip.* iv.

"And the peace of God, that surpasseth all understanding, keep your minds and hearts in Jesus Christ." *Ibid.*

"Her time is near at hand, and her days shall not be prolonged. For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose out of Israel." *Isaias*, xiv.

"And his place is in peace." *Psalm* lxxv.

"In his days shall justice spring up and abundance of peace, till the moon be taken away." *Psalm* lxxi.

CHRISTMAS EVE.

THE GOSPEL. *Luke*, ii. 1–14.

"And it came to pass, that in those days there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. This enrolling was first made by Cyrinus, governor of Syria. And all went to be enrolled, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem: because he was of the house of the family of David, to be enrolled with Mary his espoused wife, who was with child. And it came to pass, that when they were there her days were accomplished, that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him up in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds, watching and keeping the night-watches over their flocks: and behold an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone round about them, and they feared with a great fear. And the angel said to them, Fear not: for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people: for this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign unto you: you shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God, and saying: Glory to God in the highest and on earth, peace to men of good will."

Meditation.

ON THE JOURNEY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN AND ST. JOSEPH TO BETHLEHEM.

1st Point. Augustus Cæsar ordered all of his subjects to be enrolled, each one in his own country. Mary and Joseph, in obedience to the decree, went up to Bethlehem. Admire the obedience exhibited by the Son of God to this prince, who had issued the edict in order to ascertain the strength of his empire, and levy a new tribute on his subjects. As He died through obedience, He wished also to be born through obedience. It is the first and the last lesson he gave us.

Mary and Joseph, who did nothing except by the inspirations of the Divine Child, did not question the reasons of this edict, or pretend to be exempt from the obligation of obeying this earthly prince, because they had with them the King of heaven and earth. They did not excuse themselves on account of the severity of the winter, the length and ruggedness of the road, or the delicate condition of the virgin mother, who was near the time of her maternal trial, but they obeyed God blindly, in the persons of the ministers of his will; they obeyed Him courageously, under the most difficult and humiliating circumstances: they obeyed Him promptly and without delay; they obeyed Him cheerfully, without murmur or complaint. Is it thus that you obey God and your superiors?

2d Point. When they arrived at Bethlehem they sought lodgings, but as they were poor, and humble in their appearance, none would receive them! God could have changed the order of nature, appeased the rigor of the season, touched with compassion the hearts of the people of Bethlehem, and retarded or ad-

vanced the period when the Blessed Virgin could be delivered of her Divine Son. The thought of her comfortable but humble home, in Nazareth, caused no repinings in the heart of our blessed lady, as she wandered through Bethlehem, seeking in vain for rest and shelter! God could have changed all this, but he did not wish to do so. He permitted that this edict should be published at this time, because He designed that his Son should be born in a stable to give the world a great example of humility and poverty. He allowed events to go on in the ordinary course of providence, in order to teach us to submit patiently to all natural circumstances, and to yield a cheerful obedience to our superiors, ecclesiastical and temporal, good and bad, without demanding exemption or dispensation through any good in ourselves, or influence we might invoke. And yet, Christian soul! you wish that God should work miracles for you, and change the whole order of nature to accommodate your caprices!

3D POINT. Why is it that Mary seeks a lodging-place for her Divine Son? It is through the profound reverence she feels for the august infant, and that she may omit nothing which is in her power to do to have him well lodged; it is in order to render the Jews inexcusable, they having refused to receive the holy family into their homes. Why did God allow them to refuse her? In order to show how the world hated his Son, rejecting and despising Him, even before his birth, and to teach us that those who have the spirit of the world, and who are filled with the vain desires of the world, have no wish to receive or entertain Jesus Christ, but drive him away, despise Him, and refuse Him entrance into their hearts.

My soul! behold Jesus, who seeks shelter and wishes to enter into thy heart; behold Him meekly and lovingly awaiting your decision; will you refuse him admission? Will you thrust Him away, to be lodged in a stable? What would you have done, had you been a resident of Bethlehem, and Mary and Joseph had come and prayed you to give themselves and their Son lodgings? Are you not more guilty than the Jews, who did not know Him? How many times has not Jesus knocked at the door of your heart? How many times have you not refused Him admittance? How many times have you not driven Him away, after having received Him? Oh miserable soul! do you know WHO is demanding a place to lodge in? Oh twice miserable soul, if you know, and yet will not receive Him, what will you reply in the day of judgment, when He reproaches your ingratitude, and shall say, "*I was a stranger and you took me not in?*"

4TH POINT. Mary and Joseph, finding no one willing to receive them, were obliged to go out of the inhospitable city; wearied and chilled, they seek the shelter of an open stable, or, as some say, a cavern at the foot of a hill, which served as a stable and retreat for animals. The Queen of Heaven entered into this palace of poverty with a divine modesty, without a complaint or murmur against the inhabitants, much less against the providence of God. Entering here, she fell on her knees, and with her chaste spouse thanked God for having brought them to this state of poverty, humility and patience. She prepared for repose, and at that instant being in prayer, and all the world silent and peaceful, she was delivered of her Son Jesus, who passed from her chaste womb as the sun passes over a mirror, without sullying its purity! Oh my God! my Lord! thy judgments are profound! thy ways are admirable! Who would ever have believed that this child was thy Son, seeing how little care Thou didst apparently take in not providing a more suitable place for his birth than an open stable? What reason have I to complain of the poverty and miseries of life after seeing how thy providence dealt with the three persons most dear to Thee on earth! Oh blessed lady! Oh Immaculate Virgin! I am sorrowful to behold thee so maltreated and scorned by men, as to be obliged to retire into a place so little in keeping with thy dignity and honor. Oh! had I been living then, and known thee, as I now know thee, with what rapture would I not have received thee into my dwelling. The costliest of my treasures should have been placed at thy disposal, and I would have been thy servant!

I can now enjoy the same great happiness! I can now render thee the same service by offering thee a lodging for thy divine Son in my heart! Come, then, my dear and immaculate mother; bring thy divine babe to me; pray Him to enter into my soul. Alas! it is a poor and miserable stable, but since He preferred the stable of Bethlehem to the magnificent palace of kings, He will not disdain to enter into my heart, if thou wilt ask Him to do so!

Oh wisdom of God! Oh root of Jesse! Oh key of David! Oh Emanuel! Oh lawgiver and reparator of the world! Come and deliver me from thy enemy, and my passions! Come and deliver me from the shadow of death where I have been buried for years; come, resplendent sun, enlighten me with thy beams and embrace me in thy love! All the just desire Thee—all poor sinners sigh for Thee—all miserable captives implore Thee to come and strike off their chains; all the prophets call Thee, be-

seech Thee, and desire Thee. The Church says to us, that the iniquity of the world shall be effaced by the coming of the Saviour, who will reign forever. Come, then, oh divine Saviour, and accomplish the promise Thou hast made to us through thy Holy Church; drive thy enemy from my soul; blot out my sins by thy grace, and reign over me in peace, through time and in eternity.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Go forth, daughters of Sion, and see king Solomon in the diadem wherewith his mother crowned him." *Canticle* iii.

"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; to them that dwelt in the region of the shadow of death, light is risen." *Isaias*, ix.

"For a child is born to us, and a son is given to us, and the government is on his shoulders, his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of peace." *Isaias*, ix.

"He came unto his own; his own received him not." *St. John*, i.

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave power to be made the sons of God." *St. John*, i.

"For the grace of God our Saviour hath appeared to all men. Instructing us, that, renouncing impiety and worldly desires, we should live soberly and justly, and piously in this world." *Titus*, ii.

CHRISTMAS-DAY.

Meditation.

ON THE WORDS OF THE ANGELS TO THE SHEPHERDS.

1st Point. An angel appeared to the shepherds, and said to them, "*Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people.*" What led the angel to visit the shepherds? Why did he not go with the wonderful tidings to King Herod, to the high-priests, and the princes of the law? Why did he not seek the learned, the rich, and the noble of the world, to impart the news to? Why did he prefer the poor and ignorant shepherds to them? Oh judgments of God! ye are wonderful and terrible to the children of men! "*Consider, my brethren,*" says St. Paul, "*those among you whom God has called*

that there are not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble. But the foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the wise; and the weak things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the strong. And the base things of the world, and the things that are contemptible hath God chosen, and things that are not, that He might bring to naught things that are; that no flesh should glory in his sight." Are you one of the great ones of the world? Humiliate yourself, for God despises the proud and haughty. Are you unknown and despised by the world? Console yourself; God himself will aid you to accomplish a great work if you are faithful to Him.

2D POINT. God manifested this sublime mystery to the shepherds, in preference to the great and powerful ones of the world, because the shepherds were humble and lowly, and the great are generally filled with pride and haughtiness; because the shepherds were watching, and the rich and mighty of the earth were buried in slumber; because the shepherds were men of simple minds and lives, and the great ones of the world were deceitful, sensual, artful, and crafty men; because the shepherds were innocent, and the great are generally wicked. The shepherds also represented the prelates of the Church, who watch over the flock of Jesus Christ, to whom God first manifested the mysteries of his faith, that they might instruct those who receive it. The good news that the angel brought to the shepherds, was, "that a SAVIOUR was born to them!" How sweet and joyful are the tidings of liberty to a captive; what rapture fills the heart of the blind, when they are assured their sight will be restored; what gratitude and hope animates him who is bowed down with sickness and infirmities, when he learns that he is to be healed; what joy overwhelms the criminal condemned to death, when some friendly voice announces to him, that he is pardoned,—that his life is spared. All men were held in captivity by the devil, before and after death. Jesus came to deliver them from the power of this tyrant; He released them from the prison of darkness and suffering whither they had gone, and opened for them the gates of Heaven, where they might reign eternally with Him. Oh what a Saviour! what a Liberator! what captivity! what misery! Rejoice, poor sinners condemned to eternal woe! Rejoice! a Saviour is born for you; a deliverer who is born only that you may be saved.

3D POINT. This Saviour was born for all men, but especially for the poor, for the humble, for the afflicted, and those who separate themselves from the world, and lead a laborious life, like the shep-

herds. He was born visibly only once on earth, but He is born invisibly every day in the hearts of men by grace, through penance; and it is particularly at this holy season, that He causes the same effects in his Church that his birth caused in the world; delivering men from the tyranny of sin, communicating to them the life of his grace, and imparting to them a celestial peace and joy which is inexpressible. Oh my God, my Saviour! I thank Thee for the glorious tidings I hear, that Thou art my Saviour, and that Thou wast born for me. Oh my soul! lose not courage, you have a Saviour! Rise up quickly; seek the shepherds, and go with them to adore Him in the stable where He is born. You will recognize Him by his poverty, his sweetness, his charity; these are the marks of the Saviour who is born for you. Oh Saviour of my soul! I come to prostrate myself at thy feet, and offer my homage to Thee, as to my God and my sovereign Lord. I do not enter into thy palace with fear, but with confidence. Thy voice does not terrify me as it did Adam, but fills me with sorrow and compassion for thy misery. Who can fear a child—a child who weeps through pity for our miseries, and who comes to deliver us? I am overwhelmed with joy! I am transported with love, and I cannot refrain from crying out with Isaias, "*Behold my God and my Saviour.*" What reason have I to fear? What ought I not to hope? I behold in his hands, in his feet, and in his side, the fountains of life ever open for me, where I can find with joy the waters of salvation.

Oh divine child! oh desire of the eternal hills! *Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the paps that gave Thee suck.* Oh holy Virgin, thou art the happiest and most glorious of all women, because thou hast given a Saviour to a lost world. Thou art now the mother of God, and the mother of men, since by giving life to a God, thou hast given it to all men. Oh do not leave me, for whom thy Son was born to perish. Let this Holy Infant be born in my soul, since it is for this that He was born on earth, and obtain for me, oh most tender of mothers, graces so powerful, that I may be among those who are eternally saved.

FOR THE SAME DAY.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. As soon as the angel had imparted the glad and wondrous tidings to the shepherds, there suddenly appeared with him a great multitude of the celestial army, who, in strains of transporting sweetness, sang with him, saying, "*Glory be to God on high, and on earth, peace to men of good will.*" Behold the fruits of this great feast; one of which is, to advance the glory of God, the other, to give peace to men of good will, not indifferently to all, but to those whose hearts are right, and who conform to the Divine will. Do not interrupt this beautiful canticle of the angels; change not the work which God has done. He has reserved glory for himself, and given you peace. Take his peace for yourselves, but presume not in any way to assume the glory which is his. If you rob Him of his glory, He will take from you your peace.

2d Point. What is your state at this moment? What are the dispositions of your heart? Are you at peace? Whence comes this turmoil, this distrust, this vain sorrow which consumes you? Alas! without doubt, you have partaken of the forbidden fruit. You are haughty and ambitious. The words of the angel have not pleased you. You wish to take God's glory from Him, and enjoy his peace; but that you can never do. You shall have his peace when you seek his glory. If you seek your own glory, you shall have neither glory or peace.

3d Point. Oh my soul! unite in this sublime and beautiful canticle of the angels; praise Him and glorify Him with them. Oh it is grand! Oh it is admirable! Oh it does us good! Oh it is charitable, and sweet, and merciful, since He is the first to seek us, who have been his enemies, and condescends to offer us peace, instead of destroying us, as our sins deserve. Oh what more divine employment can be found, than to praise and glorify our God and King? Is it not for this end that He has created us? What madness and injustice, then, in preferring to blaspheme and insult Him with devils, rather than to praise and give Him glory with the angels. Let me chant eternally the praises of my God, and let the beautiful canticle be forever on my lips: "*Glory be to God in the highest, and peace on earth to men of good will.*"

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"God having spoken on divers occasions and in many ways, in times past, to the fathers, by the prophets, last of all hath spoken, in these days, to us by his Son." *Hebrews*, i.

"Because the light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil." *St. John*, iii.

"The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel hath not known me, and my people hath not understood." *Isaias*, i.

"Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just, let the earth be opened and bud forth a Saviour." *Isaias*, xlv.

"Verily Thou art a hidden God, the God of Israel, the Saviour." *Isaias*, xlv.

"Therefore my people shall know my name in that day, for I myself that spoke, behold I am here." *Isaias*, lii.

FOR THE SAME DAY.

Meditation.

ON THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST.

1st Point. Never has God revealed Himself in more grandeur, than when He manifested himself in weakness. Never has He shown himself more powerful, than when He made himself infirm. Never has He appeared more amiable, than when He made himself poor and miserable. When I see a God become the child of men, it consoles me to think that men can become the children of God! When I behold Him in the stable, I know that humility is necessary for me, and I am strengthened by the contemplation of his poverty. When I see Him pillowed on straw, I think with disgust of the grandeurs and pomps of the world, and despise all that is proud and sensual in myself. When I see Him weeping, sighing, and trembling with the cold, I know that I must learn to endure all trials and privations, and do penance.

2d Point. Regard, my soul, the body of this divine babe, as the august temple of wisdom. All of his actions are regulated by wisdom. All of his sighs and moans are lessons of wisdom. The manger where He reposes, is the throne of wisdom. His silence is the voice of wisdom. His sleep is the ecstasy of wis-

dom. Enter, my soul, into the stable at Bethlehem, and learn from this divine Teacher, those holy lessons of humility and poverty, which will give us a sincere contempt for the world, for its pride, and esteem.

3d Point. Jesus deceives himself, or the world abuses Him. Can Jesus deceive himself? Which of the two do you believe? The birth of Jesus is the condemnation of the world. He has condemned all those who have rejected and despised Him. If I love the esteem of the world, I shall be condemned with it. If I do not resemble this divine babe, I cannot be saved. Oh divine child! Oh desired of all nations! What entrance didst Thou make into the world? What reception have thy creatures met with? Have not the magnificence and splendor with which Thou shouldst have been received, been lavished on them?

Who could believe that a God, wishing to become a man, would have been born in a poor stable, and wept like a child? Oh tears of my Saviour, ye console the afflicted, and constrain the voluptuous to forsake the fleeting, and baseless joys of earth. My soul, do you not feel a tender compassion for this child, who begins to cancel your debts, and makes satisfaction for your sins, by his tears, to the justice of that God whom you have so often irritated? Can you still waste time in seeking the gratification of your senses, when you know that your God begins and ends his life in suffering? Shall you love and prize the goods of earth, when you see Him poor and despised?

Love only that which He loves, despise that which He hates, imitate all that He does, endure with joy that which He suffered, for He came into the world to instruct us by his words and his example. He is the word, the truth and the life. If you walk not in his footsteps, you are not his disciple, and can never inherit eternal life.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"For a child is born to us, and a son is given to us." *Isaias*, ix.

"Rejoice and praise, oh thou habitation of Sion, for great is He that is in the midst of thee, the holy one of Israel." *Isaias*, xii.

"I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people. For this day is born to you a Saviour." *Luke*, ii.

"Let us go over to Bethlehem, let us see this word that is come to pass." *Luke*, ii.

"And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us." *St. John*, i.

"For God so loved the world, as to give his only-begotten

Son, that whosever believeth in Him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting." *John*, iii.

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, being rich, He became poor for your sakes, that through his poverty you might be rich." 2 *Corinthians*, viii.

ASPIRATIONS OF TENDERNESS TOWARDS THE INFANT JESUS.

1st Point. Oh God of wisdom! Thou who hast chosen a stable for thy palace, and a manger for the throne of thy glory, where shall I hide myself in thy presence? What confusion to a proud and haughty mortal, to behold his God lying in a place so mean and poor! What insolence in a worm of the earth, to desire his own elevation, when he beholds his God thus humiliated, and his infinite majesty veiled under the very weakest form of humanity! Is it Thou, oh God, who deceivest us, or is it the world which abuses our credulity? The wisdom of God cannot deceive us, nor can He deceive himself. It is, then, the world which deludes us into esteeming that which we ought to despise, and despising that which we ought to esteem.

2d Point. Oh God of love! Thou hast concealed thy majesty under the form of a little child, but Thou hast made thy goodness and mercy shine forth with great lustre and glory. Never hast Thou appeared so amiable as in thy poverty and misery! Never has thy goodness appeared greater than in thy birth! I have always feared Thee under the form of God, but I am constrained to love Thee under the form of a little child. The Lord is great; who will not praise Him? The Lord has condescended to assume a form of littleness; who will not love Him?

3d Point. Who can stand in dread of a little child? Who is it that is not touched with compassion by the tears of a child? Thy tears fill me with compassion, sweet Jesus, and not with fear! They lift up my fallen hopes, instead of causing me to think of defying thy divine goodness. If Thou hadst power to make thyself one of the children of men, canst Thou not make me a child of God? If Thou hadst power to take on thyself the misery of our infirmities, canst Thou not bestow eternal happiness on me? Oh divine child! loved of all the earth, the most beautiful of mortals, the joy of paradise! My heart is moved with sentiments of unutterable tenderness when I see Thee weeping, and hear Thee

sighing and groaning! I have long resisted thy power, but thy infirmities have disarmed me and led me captive. I have despised thy greatness, all terrible as it is, but thy humility has delighted and drawn me to Thee. I have defied Thee, and battled against Thee when Thou wast God, but Thou hast triumphed over me in becoming man. I have defended myself against thy anger, but I cannot resist thy love. Oh greatest of all kings! Thou art admirable as God, and Thou art amiable as man! I am more astonished to see Thee debase thyself, than to see Thee elevated above all; to hear Thee weeping on earth, than to hear Thee thundering in heaven. Only one of thy tears kindles a greater fire of love for Thee in my soul, than all the lightnings of Mt. Sinai have ever done! Since Thou hast assumed the infirmities of my nature and the evils of my state, do I hope in vain that Thou wilt give me thy virtues, and take me into thy everlasting habitation above, since Thou didst descend on earth, to seek and save me!

Oh, dear child of MARY, come and let me receive Thee in my arms, rest in my heart, and bathe me with thy tears, bless me with thy little hands, kiss me with thy sacred mouth! I forget what I am in seeing Thee; forget what Thou wert. If I am deficient in the respect which I owe Thee, remember that thy excessive love is the cause. If Thou didst not wish to be loved, why hast Thou rendered thyself so amiable? Oh my judge! my Saviour! I am filled with terror when I think of Thee, on the throne of thy glory! But I am penetrated with joy, love, and compassion, when I see Thee wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger. Wert Thou made man that we might fear Thee? Didst Thou assume human flesh to damn us? Alas! if I am lost it will be through my fault and not thine. Do not, oh my Saviour, suffer so horrible an evil to befall me! Since Thou hast descended from heaven to earth to seek me, fly not from me, now that Thou hast found me! Let me not work out my own condemnation, since Thou hast come into the world to save me. Amen.

FEAST OF ST. STEPHEN.

Meditation.

ON HIS VIRTUES AND MARTYRDOM.

1ST POINT. To speak according to the Scripture, St. Stephen was *full of faith*, that is, he had a lively faith, an active faith, a

perfect faith, a firm faith, a constant and immovable faith, and, above all, a declared faith, which did not blush at the gospel. Are you full of faith? Do you profess it openly and without shame? Do you not fear to be known as a disciple of Jesus Christ? Is your faith full of life and activity? Do you embrace all the maxims of the gospel? Do you believe and understand its practical truths? Does your faith shine in the darkness as well as in the light, in the tempest as steadily as in the calm? You believe there is a heaven, but do you believe that to enter therein it is necessary to become as a little child, and to suffer many tribulations? You believe that Jesus Christ is really present, under the form of bread, a hidden God; but do you believe also that He is hidden under the guise of poverty, in the persons of the poor, who ask alms of you?

Alas! you are not filled with faith, but with infidelity! You only believe half; you believe with doubt, you believe only for a season; you do not believe that which is spoken to you by authority. Then if you do not believe all, you are a heretic and an infidel.

2D POINT. St. Stephen was filled with grace. He was pure in his body and strong in his soul. It is this which made him appear as an angel in the synagogue, for those whose souls are pure, and in a state of grace, are possessed of a brilliancy and splendor and an angelical beauty. Oh, if the vices which you have concealed in your heart, and the impurities with which you stain your body, were outwardly revealed, you would appear like one of those evil and accursed spirits of hell who, without hope themselves, maliciously practice evil, to cause the damnation of others. You are not filled with grace but with sin, with pride, with envy, with vanity, with anger, with disquiet, with impatience, and all other vices.

3D POINT. St. Stephen was filled with strength; he appeared to fight courageously with the enemies of Jesus Christ, and to suffer death for Him; no one had yet been martyred, and he desired and rejoiced to set the example. And you, oh Christian, are cowardly; you spare yourself, and slink away from every trial; the least infirmity or sickness that lays hold of you, the least adversity that happens to you, cause you to lose courage! It is only necessary for any one to throw a stone or utter a harsh word, to place you in peril of almost renouncing your faith. It is only necessary to inflict an injury on you, to cause you to forget that you are a Christian! What then? Have you not promised, at the baptismal font, to die in the defence of your faith? How

will you, who are not able to bear the lashes of an evil tongue, bear the sword of persecution? How will you, who are not able to endure a slight injury, or a harsh word, bear the heavy stones which the enemies of God will hurl at you when they seek your life?

4TH POINT. St. Stephen was filled with the Holy Ghost, from whom proceeded his charity towards God and his neighbor. He showed his love for God by dying in the conflict; he showed his love for his neighbor by praying for those who stoned him; he grieved more for the sins he had committed, than for the torments he endured; he was a martyr of the body and of the heart; of the body, in dying by the hands of his enemies; of the heart, in praying for his enemies. Are you full of charity? Are you full of the Holy Ghost? Do you grieve more for the evils which are inflicted on you than for those which you have committed? Do you love your enemies? Do you return them good for evil? Do you pray for them and forgive them from your heart? If you forgive them not, God will not forgive you. Forgive, and you shall be forgiven. Help others, and you shall be aided in time of need. Oh, what more glorious martyrs than those of the heart! Oh, what more noble, than those of the body! For it is more difficult to forgive an injury, than to suffer some bodily pang. You cannot be a martyr in the body, be one, therefore, in your soul. See the heavens open, and Jesus, who is the spectator of your combats, appears; say to Him, as Saint Stephen did, oh my Lord Jesus! pardon, I pray Thee, all those who have offended me, and do not impute to them the sins they have committed against Thee, and against me. Oh my Lord Jesus, receive my spirit, and give me thine! Take from me my spirit, which is so base, so unfaithful, so unworthy of pity, so wicked, so hasty, so unforgiving, and give me thine, which is a strong and faithful spirit, a holy and sweet spirit, a patient and charitable spirit, that, after life's conflict ends, I may see thy face in peace. Amen.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Now Stephen, full of grace and fortitude, did great wonders and miracles among the people." *Acts*, vi.

"And all they who sat in the council, looking earnestly upon him, saw his face, as it were the face of an angel." *Ibid.*

"And he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looking up steadfastly to heaven, saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God." *Acts*, vii.

"And, kneeling down, he cried out with a loud voice, saying, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." *Acts*, vii.

FEAST OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST.

Meditation.

ON THESE WORDS OF THE GOSPEL:

"*The disciple that Jesus loved.*" St. John, ii.

1st Point. St. John loved Jesus Christ, and he was beloved by Jesus Christ. The love he bore Jesus Christ constituted his happiness; the love he bore Jesus Christ was his merit; their mutual love rendered St. John the friend of Jesus, because friendship demands a return of the same.

Can you, for an instant, doubt that you are loved by Jesus Christ? The general and particular graces, which He has given you, are incontestible proofs of his love. See Him in a stable! Behold Him on the cross! Contemplate Him on our altars! Behold the love He has shown towards you! How many times have you eaten at his table? How many times have you reposed on his bosom, and He on yours, in holy communion? Can you, after these unspeakable favors, still doubt his love? Recall to memory all the benefits He has bestowed on you, from the moment of your birth, and, penetrated with gratitude, you must acknowledge that you are the well-beloved disciple of Jesus Christ. But are you the *well-loving* disciple? What have been the visible signs of your love? In what manner have you corresponded with his graces and blessings? If He were to ask you, as He did St. Peter, "*Simon, son of John, lovest thou me?*" could you answer, with truth, that you love Him? Are you ready to leave all for Him, you, who cannot desist from a sinful gratification, for the sake of his love? You declare your willingness to die for Him, notwithstanding which you cannot endure a few harsh words, or bear the infliction of injustice or injury, with patience, for his sake.

2d Point. One of the effects of the love of Jesus Christ for St. John, was the high knowledge it gave him of the incomprehensible mysteries of faith, especially of his divinity and his incarnation, which he explains in these astonishing words: "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God: And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.*" Another result of this love was, that Jesus allowed him the sweet privilege of resting on his bosom. The third was, in consigning to his care, and giving to him as his own, his holy mother, as they

stood, filled with grief, at the foot of his cross! Behold, again, if you are not more blind and ungrateful than all the world, that you are the well-beloved disciple of Jesus Christ. Remember and consider all the truths which He has revealed to you! Behold with how tender a compassion he has entered in your heart in holy communion, and caused you to rest on his bosom! Oh divine banquet! Oh holy place of rest, where the little Benjamin reposes in delight and rapture, while the others sit at meat! Has not Jesus given you to his dear mother, as he did St. John? Does he not say to you, when you stand afflicted and weeping at the foot of the cross, "*Son, behold thy mother!*" Why, then, do you not always pray to Him? Why do you not invoke her aid? Why have you so little confidence in her maternal love?

3D POINT. St. John testified his love for Jesus Christ by the chaste purity of his body, by the fidelity of his soul, and by the inseparable attachment he felt for his divine Master, which led him even up to the foot of the cross; by the contempt he felt for the world, which is the enemy of God; by the love he bore towards his fellow men, and which he so often and so emphatically recommends to us, in these words; "*Love one another!*" And, finally, by the love he bore to the Blessed Virgin, and the filial services he delighted to render her. Is not loving the son to love the mother also? Is it not honoring the son to honor the mother? Is it thus that you love Jesus? Are you chaste in body and soul? Are you faithful to the duties which your love for Him demands? Above all, do you follow your Master? Do you accompany Him to Calvary as well as to Thabor? Do you not abandon Him when He is outraged and insulted by the impious? Do you stand by Him when they lead Him to his cross? Do you hate the world? Do you love your neighbor? Are you devoted to the Blessed Virgin? Do you receive and love her as your mother? Jesus, my Saviour! my soul is filled with consolation, when I see how Thou hast loved me! But I am overwhelmed with shame, when I reflect how little I have loved thee? What hast Thou found in me worthy of thy love? What have I seen in Thee unworthy of my love? Nothing, my Saviour, and yet I am cold, and indifferent to Thee. I have despised Thee, instead of loving Thee. I have repaid thy goodness with malice and ingratitude, and prized thy friendship less than the good esteem of the world, and of creatures as miserable as myself. Oh, I wish to love Thee henceforth with a pure, faithful, constant, disinterested and generous love. I desire to love Thee while I live on earth, that, after death, I may love Thee eternally in heaven.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"He saith to his mother: Woman, behold thy son! After that He saith to his disciple: Son, behold thy mother." *St. John*, xix.

"That disciple, therefore, whom the Lord loved." *St. John*, xxi.

"And he saw the spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him." *St. Matt.* iii.

"The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." 1 *Kings*, xviii.

FEAST OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS.

Meditation.

ON THEIR MARTYRDOM.

1st Point. Truly it was a glorious and happy thing for these little children to die for Jesus Christ! If they had lived they would have been crucified, as were their fathers. Mothers! why do you weep and lament? Could you, for one moment, conceive or know the bliss of their immortality or the glory of their crowns, ye would no longer afflict yourselves. Behold, how easily the instincts of our nature blind us; we often weep when we should rejoice and be glad: you are inconsolable for the loss of an infant, whom God has taken, in its innocence, to himself; and do you know, if it had lived many years in the world, it would have died in sin and been eternally lost? You repine over your fallen fortunes, and regret the loss of temporal possessions, and do you know, if God, in his wisdom, had not deprived you of them, they would have been the cause of your losing your soul?

2d Point. What is more perilous to the soul than to submit to the dominion of an ungovernable passion; to abandon one's self to ambition; to encourage suspicions which wound charity; to judge rashly; to act with precipitation, or be carried away by uncontrollable anger? This horrible carnage was caused by the wicked presumption and ambition of Herod's heart; by the rashness of his judgment; the precipitation of his acts, and the predominance of his passions. I ask, what is the evil that governs you? What is your predominant passion? Is it pride? Is it vanity? Is it envy? Is it anger? Be careful, then, to form no resolution when your mind is irritated and troubled. Your heart becomes hard-

ened when your passions are agitated. It is necessary, at such times, to implore the assistance of God, that his grace may sustain you until the storm rolls by; that his hand may uphold you when troubled waters rise around you. It is one of the great triumphs of the devil, when you make no resistance, and seek no help from God in the time of temptation.

3d Point. Herod is dead, but he has left many inheritors of his crimes. The world is full of his disciples, who wish to destroy Jesus Christ, when he is born in our hearts. The devil persecutes us by his temptations, the impious by their conversation, the dissipated by their bad example; men by their solicitations, women by their scandalous allurements, and shameful immodesty. Alas! we all have a Herod in ourselves, who uses our passions as his satellites, to kill the divine babe. Unhappy and miserable one, if you take the part of Herod against Jesus Christ; if you consult his designs, and accept the arms and strength he offers you to cause the death of the infant Jesus. Alas! how often have you done it? You are more guilty than Herod! He desired to kill Him, but did not accomplish his wicked purpose; but how many thousand times have you not caused Him to die in your hearts? Did Herod know Him as you knew Him? Did he receive the favors which you have received? Did he understand the penalties of sin? Did he hope for an eternal recompense?

"*Saul! Saul! why persecutest thou me?*" It is Jesus Christ who speaks to you from the heaven of his crib! What evil has He done you that you should wish to take from Him the life that He has in your heart, and in that of your neighbor; life which He prizes next to that given Him by his holy mother? You persecute Jesus Christ when you persecute his servants; when you mock and scoff at their devotions; when you give bad example to your fellow beings, and when you tempt them to commit evil.

Console yourselves, afflicted and persecuted souls! In your sufferings and patience behold the marks of your eternal safety. The decree is pronounced; it is necessary to make a choice between two eternities! It is inevitable that we must either be saved or lost! Have you preserved your innocence? If you have lost it, it is necessary to recover it by repentance. If you have not lost it rejoice, for God and men are your witnesses!

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Herod sought the young child to kill Him." *St. Matt.* ii.

"The Jews sought Him with ardor, because they wished to kill Him." *St. John*, v.

"Saul! Saul! why persecutest thou me?" *Acts* ix.

"I have done for you many good works, why then do you wish me to die?" *St. John*, x.

"All those who live in piety with Jesus Christ shall be persecuted." 2 *Timothy*, iii.

TWENTY-NINTH OF DECEMBER.

Meditation.

ON THE POVERTY OF JESUS CHRIST.

1st Point. Jesus made himself poor, in order to enrich us. He trampled this world's all, of grandeur and riches, underfoot, to teach us to despise them. He placed himself in a mean and lowly place, that we might ascend to the glory of a throne in heaven! Behold the King of the world, without a house to shelter Him, and obliged to lodge in a stable among beasts! Can any one be born in greater poverty than this? Can any one live in greater poverty than He did? Can any one die in greater poverty than He did, who is the Lord of all?

2d Point. Jesus is poor and you are rich! Jesus is in a stable and you are in a palace; Jesus is on straw and you repose on down! Jesus is naked and you are clad in rich raiment! Jesus wants for all things and you want for nothing. What will be your response, at the day of judgment, when He will reproach you, saying that you neither lodged, nourished, clothed or visited Him? Compare your house with his stable! your bed with his manger! your down pillows with his straw? your costly raiment with his rags! your luxury, and its appendages, with his nakedness! Oh divine babe! thy birth fills me with joy, but thy crib terrifies me! I love the poor, but I do not love thy poverty; I wish to assist the miserable, but I do not wish to feel their miseries.

3d Point. What am I? I cannot be saved unless I resemble Thee! It is necessary, then, that I should be poor like Thee, or retain my riches. I cannot resolve to be poor like Thee, but I can invite Thee to share my riches. It is to nourish Thee that I feed the hungry; it is to assist Thee that I aid the needy; it is to do Thee good that I relieve the necessities of the poor. I wish, from this moment, to nourish, clothe and assist Thee, in the persons of the poor. Oh, I esteem myself happy in being able to return to

Thee that which Thou hast given me. What joy! what consolation! that I can nourish Thee, lodge Thee, clothe Thee, and assist in all thy necessities, and make Thee part of my treasures.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"The foxes have their dens, and the birds of the air their nests, but the Son of Man had not where to lay his head." *St. Matt.* viii.

"He came unto his own, and his own received Him not." *John*, i.

"I say to you, that as many times as you have shown charity to the least of mine, it is to me that you have done it." *St. Matt.* xxv.

"Jesus Christ being rich, He made himself poor, in order to enrich us by his poverty." 2 *Corinthians*, viii.

THIRTIETH OF DECEMBER.

Meditation.

ON THE HUMILITY OF THE INFANT JESUS.

1st Point. God was born as man, and united Himself to nothingness. He left the splendor of his greatness, and united himself to a creature. He made himself as low as he was before exalted. His humiliation is only equalled by his elevation, which is infinite, substantial, and shall be eternal; and, after He was clothed in our flesh, He bore the signs of his abasement and humiliation. And I, who am only nothingness, am unwilling to lower myself before my God! I wish to elevate myself above all men; I love only honor and praise, and I cannot bear that any one should blame my defects, my vices, my weaknesses.

2d Point. Why, O my God, didst Thou become man? Why didst Thou subject thyself to impressions from external agents? Why give thy creatures power over Thee? Why didst Thou clothe thyself in our flesh? Why didst Thou become a little child? Why wast Thou born of a woman, and why choose a stable for the place of thy birth? Ah! it was to subdue my pride; it was to teach me humility; it was in order to gain my heart by thy likeness to myself.

3d Point. Alas, I am a sinful and unworthy disciple! I have a God for my master, whose lessons, in the science of holiness, are

filled with wisdom, and who teaches me, by his example, and yet I learn nothing. I see my nothingness, and I am still proud; I see my poverty, and still covet riches; I see my condition, which humiliates me below all men, and I still wish to elevate myself above all the world. Oh divine infant! Thou art great in the heavens, but Thou art of no repute on earth! Thou art honored by angels, but Thou art despised by men! Truly, it is a wonderful spectacle, to see a God thus humiliated; but it is a stranger and more wonderful sight, to see pride stand by and gaze on the divine infant, in the manger, at Bethlehem. What remedy is there for my pride, if the humility of my God does not cure it? It is an insupportable thing to see a worm of the dust swelled with pride, since the eternal God has humbled his majesty and abased his power for the sins of men!

Depart from me all pride and haughtiness! my God has humbled himself for me; I wish to become, like Him, little and humble, that I may become great and glorious, with Him, hereafter.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Those who humiliate themselves as this little child, shall be great in the kingdom of heaven." *St. Matt.* xviii.

"Behold my God, my Saviour, I will deal confidently with him, and will not fear." *Isaias*, xii.

"He has humiliated himself in taking the form of a servant." *Philip.* ii.

"Humiliate yourselves under the powerful hand of God, that He may raise you in the time of his visit." 1 *Peter*, v.

THIRTIETH OF DECEMBER.

Meditation.

ON DEATH.

1st Point. Years glide swiftly by, time passes rapidly, death approaches, eternity is at hand. They warn us of the necessity of a preparation for death. We are on the threshold of a new year, and ere it shall have closed, we may be in eternity! many who had promised themselves to live until the expiration of the present year, are no more—they are dead. Are you sure that the same thing may not occur to you? Hold yourself, then, in

readiness, and regard the year into which you are about to enter as the last of your life.

2d Point. Christian soul! what is it that you fear? Why is it that death appals you? Is it the pain of dying which alarms you? Ah, why is it that you cannot suffer like a little child, and submit with courage to that which a fly, a sparrow, or an ant, has endured? All creatures die; a child of one day old tastes as much of death as an old man of an hundred years; why, then, can you not learn how to meet it with courage? Surely you love the world, the joys of earth, and your body, too well, since you experience such bitter pangs at the idea of leaving them! Have you buried those opportunities, which life afforded you, to win an eternal and heavenly rest, that you are so unwilling to cast it off? Is it not God who has given it to you? Has He not a right to dispose of it in the manner which is most pleasing to himself? He has given you the use of it, but retained the right to dispose of it for himself; it is a deposit which must, sooner or later, be returned, with interest, on all He has given with it. Are you ready to return it to the giver?

3d Point. What will so much speculation, so many doubts and fears, avail you? Death is the period which will inevitably solve them all. It is a great folly to waste time in learning those things which should be avoided; one fears that which is doubtful, but prepares and waits for that which is certain. You defeat the design of your creation, if you are not resigned to death; you are not prepared for eternity if you do not welcome this messenger of God. Are you mortal? Are you a sinner? Are you a child of Adam. Through him death is entailed on all the children of men; all creatures were placed under the same condemnation. You carried, in the womb and at your birth, the decree of death written in your flesh. If the great, the wise, and the holy die, can you alone claim a dispensation from death? Death is not a curse, it is a blessing; Jesus died, and you sigh for the privilege of escaping! If you were exempt from the inexorable law of death, you would tenderly complain to our Lord, and ask Him to pardon you for not being able to die for and like Him! Do you love Him, you who would fly from Him and do not wish to make reparation for his life by the loss of yours?

4th Point. Verily the judgments of God are terrible, but his mercies are infinite. It is good to fear, but it is better to hope. He who hopes in God shall never be confounded; he who abandons himself to the mercy of God shall never be abandoned by his mercy. Will your condition be improved by length of days

You will increase your debts, instead of diminishing them. If you desire to live, that you may do penance, begin to-day! You can do nothing better than to accept death, with resignation, for your sins. You can exhibit no greater evidence of your love for God, than a perfect willingness to die for Him!

Oh God my Saviour, my Lord! it fills me with joy to think I can lay down my life for Thee; that I can willingly sacrifice it to Thee, who didst so willingly sacrifice thine for me. I cannot be a martyr of faith, but I can be one of charity; I offer to Thee, then, my God, that which death shall take from me of living strength; I offer to Thee, through charity, that which I cannot refuse to necessity; I will commence this year, like one who is certain he shall not live until its close. Oh, Thou hast heaped thy graces on me, and I, unfaithful one, have gone on in my sins! Thou hast delivered me from perils and dangers; Thou hast guarded me night and day; Thou hast preserved my soul from hell! What return shall I make Thee, oh my God, for all thy benefits, unless I resign humbly, into the hands of thy mercy, the life Thou hast given me?

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Death is preferable to a bitter life, and an eternal repose to a continual languor." *Eccles.* xxx.

"Oh death! thy judgment is sweet and agreeable to those who have fallen into poverty, who have no more strength, and who are loaded with years." *Eccles.* xli.

"Fear not the judgments of death. Remember that which has been before thee, and that which is to come. God has condemned all men." *Eccles.* iv.

"We know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a home, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." 2 *Corinthians*, v.

"Unhappy am I when they shall deliver this body to death." *Romans*, vii.

FIRST OF JANUARY.

Meditation.

ON THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS, WHICH WAS GIVEN TO OUR LORD ON THE DAY OF HIS CIRCUMCISION.

1st Point. Jesus is a name of greatness, a name of sweetness, a name of valor! It is a name of greatness, because it signifies

the God of men! It is a name of sweetness, because it signifies the Father of men! It is a name of valor, because it signifies the Saviour of men! His greatness is adored in heaven; his sweetness is loved on earth; his valor is feared in hell. "*God*," says St. Paul, "*has given Him a name above all names, that, at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, of those in heaven, on earth, and in hell.*" Prostrate yourself, and adore God your Saviour!

2D POINT. When I pronounce the name of Jesus, I represent to myself the greatest of all kings, the most loving of all fathers, the most valiant of all warriors, the most humble of all men, the most faithful of all friends, the sweetest of all masters, the most obliging of all hearts, the most amiable of all spouses. If He is your king, Christian soul, why is it that you do not fear Him? If He is your Father, why is it that you do not honor Him? If He is your captain, why is it that you do not follow Him? If He is your friend, why is it that you do not confide in Him? If He is the most humble of all men, why is it that you are so proud? If He is the sweetest of all masters, why is it that you are so passionate? If He is so obliging, why are you not more grateful? If He is the peace of your soul, why do you not love Him?

3D POINT. When I pronounce the name of Jesus, my sadness is dissipated, my courage is renewed, my heart becomes joyful, my spirit shakes off its sloth, my passions are calmed, my desires are appeased, my soul is filled with delight, my enemies retreat discomfited and afraid. If Jesus is my Saviour, can He not save me? Does He not wish to save me? Is it not his sole employment and office, to save me? He has charged Himself with the care of my salvation, He has received and accepted the commission; He has made it his business, his honor, his pleasure; He has spared nothing to accomplish it, not even his own life! What is there for me to fear, while I have such a Saviour? What ought I not to hope, since I have such a Saviour?

Oh, Jesus, father of the poor and consolation of the afflicted, my soul is without language before Thee and my heart can say nothing, except that Thou art my only good. Be Thou with me, my Jesus, during life; be with me, my Jesus, in the hour of death. If I have committed any evil which will damn me, Thou hast omitted no good which can save me. Oh, Jesus, place thyself as a seal on my spirit, as a seal on my heart, as a seal on my mouth, as a seal on my arms; on my spirit, that I may think only of Thee; on my heart, that I may love only Thee; on my mouth, that I may speak only of Thee; on my arms, that I may

work only for Thee. Oh, holy name of Jesus! I adore Thee as a name of grandeur! I love Thee as a name of sweetness! I invoke Thee as a name of wonderful strength and courage. Oh, sweet Jesus, in order to be saved I would give my blood, since Thou hast shed thine to save me; I wish to suffer wounds and sorrows, that I may be saved with Thee, live with Thee, and praise Thee forevermore.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Thou art in us, oh Lord, and thy holy name is invoked by us; do not abandon us, Thou who art our Lord and our God." *Jeremias*, xiv.

"Whoever invokes the Lord shall be saved." *Joel*, ii.

"No other name under the heavens has been given to men by which they can be saved." *Acts*, iv.

"Let every knee bend at the name of Jesus." *Philip.* ii.

SECOND OF JANUARY.

Meditation.

ON THE ABASEMENT OF THE SON OF GOD, IN HIS INCARNATION AND CIRCUMCISION.

1st Point. The Word was God, and made itself flesh. Inconceivably happy, it assumed a state of misery. Infinitely holy, it assumed the form of a sinner. He made himself man, to communicate to us his divinity. He took on himself a life of misery, to communicate to us his felicity. He appeared as a sinner, to communicate to us his holiness.

2d Point. Oh, Jesus! hidden under the form of a man! Oh, Jesus! hidden under the form of a sinner! Oh, Jesus! hidden under the form of misery! Oh, greatest and smallest! Oh, first and last! Oh, the most exalted and the most abased.

3d Point. My soul, are you still inflated with emotions of pride, when you consider the abasement of your God? Can you wish to be esteemed holy by the world, when you behold Him, under the form of a sinner? Can you still desire to revel in pleasures, and luxuries, when you see your God persecuted and suffering? Oh, nothingness, will you never abase yourself? Will you never find your true place, and remain humbly in it? Where ought you to be? What good have you done? What evil have you not done?

Whence come you? Whither do you hasten? Your blindness is without remedy, if it cannot be cured by the humility of your God.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"The Word was made flesh." *St. John*, i.

"He has debased himself, and taken upon himself the form of a servant." *Philip.* ii.

"God has sent his Son, clad in flesh, resembling that of sinners." *Romans*, viii.

THIRD OF JANUARY.

Meditation.

LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST COMPARED WITH OURS.

1st Point. Jesus was poor on earth, and I pine for riches and splendor. Jesus was humble, and I am proud. Jesus was amiable, and I am the slave of angry passions. Jesus was patient, and I cannot endure suffering.

2d Point. Jesus pardoned and prayed for his enemies, and I desire to be revenged on mine. Jesus obeyed his inferiors, and I do not submit to my superiors. Jesus was hated by the world, and I seek the esteem of the world. Jesus was despised, and I desire to be honored. Jesus kept himself hidden, and I wish to be seen and applauded.

3d Point. Jesus ascended into heaven, through the sufferings of his life and passion; I wish to gain heaven by a life of enjoyment and ease. Jesus died on a cross, to merit a glory which belonged to Him, and I do not wish to suffer any thing on earth, to merit a glory which does not belong to me. Is it just, that a slave should be better treated than his master; that the guilty should receive more mercy than the innocent?

Oh, my Saviour! my life is opposed to thine. I am ravished with delight when I consider thy virtues! but I tremble with fear when I think of my vices. How can I be saved, if I do not resemble Thee? What contradictions hast Thou not suffered from sinners? Alas! none can be greater than those Thou hast borne from me during the whole course of my life. Can I believe I shall be of the number of those who are saved, being so unlike the Head, the being, the model of the predestined.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"The disciple s not above his master, nor the servant above his Lord." *St. Matt.* x.

"But of him are you in Jesus Christ, who is made to us from God, wisdom, justice, sanctification, and redemption." 1 *Corinthians*, i.

"I am the way, the truth, and the life." *St. John*, xiv.

"Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thy heart." *Kings*, iv.

FOURTH OF JANUARY.

Meditation.

ON THE GOOD USE OF TIME.

1st Point. Time is short, every moment is precious, and should be devoted to the interests of eternity. It is short, because it is yours only during your life; its loss is irreparable, because it will never return.

And, notwithstanding all this, I employ it unprofitably. The use I have made of it is shameful and miserable. How did I spend the preceding year? What have I been doing all the years of my life? Alas! I have been engaged in doing those things which I ought not to have done, and in leaving undone those things which I should have done. Oh, what account shall I render for all the misspent time of my life?

2d Point. What will it avail you to have lived in pleasures, if you die in misery? What unavailing sorrow will consume you, for your abuse of time, if you are miserable in eternity? Time is given to you that you may work out your salvation. It rests with you, more or less, to be lost or saved. Ponder well the affairs of your soul.

3d Point. Time is fleeting; death draws near; eternity advances; judgment is at hand. Behold how life passes! Behold your health failing, your strength wasting. Poor, miserable creature! if the messenger comes this night, to demand your soul, what will all those possessions which you have amassed avail you? To whom will you give them? *If the sinful man is not charitable to himself, how can he be merciful to others?* You will desire, after death, a single moment of the time which you have devoted to your pleasures; you will regret, bitterly, having

squandered so unprofitably the time you should have devoted to the safety of your soul, but your desires will be in vain, your regrets unavailing. Make a good use of time, lest, in the midst of your sins, a mighty angel appear, and *swear by Him, who liveth forever, that time shall be no longer for you!* Employ every precious moment in working out your salvation, which, above all things, is necessary for you; repair the time you have lost, by true and salutary repentance; arrange all your plans for the future, with reference to eternity; think of your soul's safety; meditate on eternity. The devil assails you on every side, exerting all his guile and strength for a victory over you, "*knowing*," says St. John, "*that during time he is strong.*" Work, then, Christian soul, work with all your might, to perform those things which are necessary for your salvation; work while it is yet day, for the night cometh when no man shall work.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"The wicked were taken away before their time, and a flood hath overthrown their foundations." *Job*, xxii.

"Be not overmuch wicked, and be not foolish, lest thou die before thy time." *Eccles.* vii.

"The time of this life is short." 1 *Cor.* vii.

"Be ye wise, redeeming the time, for the days are evil." *Ephesians*, v.

"Therefore, while we have time let us do good." *Galatians*, vi.

"And he swore by Him that liveth forever and ever, who created heaven and the things which are therein, and the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things which are therein, that time shall be no longer." *Apocalypse*, x.

THE EVE OF THE EPIPHANY.

Meditation.

ON THE JOURNEY OF THE MAGI.

1st Point. The Magi beheld a new and extraordinary star appear in the heavens, and while they gazed with wonder on it, they knew, by divine inspiration, that it was the herald of the birth of the King of the Jews, and the Saviour of the world; and, without loss of time, they commenced a long and difficult

journey, to find and adore Him! What faith! What obedience! What courage!

For how long a time has not God called you by secret inspirations, by interior touches of grace, by the words of preachers, by the counsel of confessors, by good books, and by the example of holy men? Oh, how often has not God called you from darkness to light, from sin to a state of grace, from spiritual sloth to a more perfect life? Notwithstanding this, you close your eyes to the light of his inspirations, and delay your conversion from day to day. Is it thus that you obey God? What would have become of the Magi, if they had procrastinated, as you are doing? Oh, Jerusalem, thou shalt be abandoned, because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation; hasten to profit by the light, which dawns so brightly on you, lest it should be withdrawn and never return; you will never behold Jesus Christ unless you obey his inspirations.

2D POINT. The Magi knew that the obstacles, which opposed their undertaking so long a journey, were grave and difficult. It was necessary to leave their country, their wives and children, their pleasures, their occupations, their possessions, their affairs; they had much to apprehend, from unfriendly kings, on their way, and, above all, from king Herod, who was a haughty, ambitious, cruel and perfidious prince, and who could have had them arrested, as seditious men and disturbers of the peace; but, in their desire to adore Jesus Christ, they triumphed over all these considerations, and gave themselves up entirely to the guidance of God, who called them.

Why do you not follow their glorious example? Why do you defer your conversion from day to day? Alas! you are averse to leaving your pleasures, you have not courage sufficient to detach yourself from the love of creatures, you dread pain and difficulty, you care only for rest and tranquillity. And are you so deceived as to believe you are in a state of grace, when you are at war with God? If it is necessary to leave father and mother, wife and child, and all that you possess, to follow our Lord, how can you be his disciple if you refuse to separate yourself from dangerous gratifications, and the occasions of sin?

3D POINT. When the Magi drew near to Jerusalem the resplendant star, which had guided their steps, suddenly disappeared. Did these men, who had been so obedient and faithful to the inspirations of God, feel dismayed, and believing that they had been under a delusion, resolve to return to their own country? No; instead of yielding to the human doubts, which might have

assailed them, they entered into Jerusalem, and demanded boldly of its inhabitants: "*Where is He who is born King of the Jews?*"

The light of heaven often disappears from our souls' vision, because we enter into the great world, where all are at enmity with Him, or because God wishes to prove our faith, our courage, our fidelity. Then it becomes necessary to appeal to the doctors of the law, who tell you, without doubt, and on the highest authority, that Jesus is born in Bethlehem! Return thanks to God, for having enlightened you with a light so clear and beautiful, and who has given you, in your darkness, guides so learned and faithful, to conduct you to Him.

4TH POINT. After the Magi had come out of Jerusalem, where all were troubled by the news, which had gone abroad, the star reappeared, and rested over the humble stable in Bethlehem, where, to their great joy, they found the divine infant, with Mary, his mother; and, after adoring Him, they presented the costly gifts they had brought with them. Admire their faith, their hope, their charity, their humility, and their devotion.

Oh, my soul, let us hasten this day to Bethlehem, that we may adore our Saviour! He, with his holy mother, invites us. Prepare your presents, for you must not appear with empty hands before God. Have you incense? Have you gold? Have you myrrh? He desires prayer, charity, and mortification. Offer Him gold by your alms, incense by your prayers, and myrrh by your patience. Offer Him your soul, and all that you have and are, and He will reign the king of your heart forever.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"We have seen his star in the east, and have come to adore Him." *St. Matt.* ii.

"And king Herod hearing this was much troubled, and all Jerusalem with him." *Ibid.*

"Come, let us adore and fall down, and weep before the Lord that hath made us. For He is the Lord our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hands." *Psalm* xciv.

"They have been rebellious to the light." *Job*, xxiv.

"Because I have called you, and you refused me; I stretched forth my hand, and there was none that regarded. You have despised all my counsels, and have neglected my reprehensions. I also will laugh in your destruction, and will mock you, when that shall come to you which you have feared." *Proverbs*, i.

EPIPHANY.

Meditation.

ON THE KINGDOM OF JESUS CHRIST AND THAT OF SATAN.

1st Point. You cannot be without a master in this life; and it is impossible to have two. It is necessary, then, to serve Jesus or Satan. To which of these do you wish to belong? You are the servant of him whose will you do. Jesus is the best of all sovereigns; Satan the most cruel of all tyrants. Jesus loves us with a love which is infinite; Satan hates us with a malice which is infinite. Jesus reigns in peace; Satan reigns in confusion and torment. The reign of Jesus renders us most happy, in time and in eternity; that of Satan renders us miserable during life, and after death.

2d Point. Jesus will not reign over us, unless we keep his commandments. He reigns over our spirits by faith, our hearts by charity, our souls by peace, our bodies by suffering. He governs us by his wisdom, sustains us by his strength, sanctifies us by his love. He reigns in us by his wisdom, when we renounce our own judgment; He reigns by his power, when we renounce our own strength; He reigns by his inspirations, when we renounce our own will.

3d Point. Do all that God wills you to do; suffer all that He sends you; preserve his grace as your greatest treasure; keep in peace; obey his inspirations, yield nothing to the evil suggestions of your passions; be willing to do every thing, be willing to do nothing, desire that all things may work together for good, and bear the fruits of righteousness. Be always contented, always submissive, always resigned; live and die on the cross.

Behold the kingdom of God, behold that which constitutes the dominion of his empire. Oh Jesus! my king; I am thy servant, and the son of thy servant. Canst Thou still wish to enter into a heart from whence Thou hast been so often driven? Thou canst not live in me, because I am not in thy grace; Thou canst not reign in me, because I am not at peace with all men. But, dear Lord, pity me, and enter my heart, and take possession of thy kingdom; remain in it always; defend thyself in me, against myself, and against the enemy of thy crown. Satan declares himself my master; the world says, I am its slave; pride claims me for its own; the flesh says, I am his: and I, I cry out

against them all, and declare to all the world, and with all my strength, that I belong to Jesus Christ; that I am purchased at the price of the blood of Jesus; that I wish to live and die for Jesus; that nothing shall separate me from the love, the service, and the fidelity I owe Jesus.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"And he said to the Jews, behold your king." *St. John*, xix.

"And Jesus said to them, You are from beneath, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world." *St. John*, viii.

"And He hath on his garments and on his thigh written, King of kings, and Lord of lords." *Apoc.* xix.

"Let not therefore sin reign in your mortal body, so as to obey the lusts thereof." *Romans*, vi.

"Rule Thou over us, and thy Son." *Judges*, viii.

SEVENTH OF JANUARY.

Meditation.

ON THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

1st Point. God reigns in the heart of man, and man reigns in the heart of God. God reigns in the heart of man, when man does his will in all things. By doing the will of God at all times, and in all things, man reigns in God, and God in man. God does the will of those who do his; He condescends to those who obey Him; He reigns by his providence, and man by obedience. To serve God faithfully, is to reign; to obey Him is commanded.

2d Point. Are you a servant of God? Do you keep his commandments? Do you obey his will? Do you abandon yourself to be governed by his providence? Why is it then that you depend only on your intellect? on your address? on your possessions? on your friends? on your influence? on your credit? Why is it that you are continually agitated by desires, and fears, and trouble, and inquietude? If you desire only the will of God, why are you afflicted when it is done? Why do you murmur at his providence, and resist his inspirations? God does not do what you pray Him to do, because you are not conformed to his will. He destroys your designs because they are opposed to his; he resists you because you resist Him; He afflicts you because you grieve Him.

3D POINT. Oh, my God, it is right that I should depend on Thee, but is it just thou shouldst wait on me? It is just that I should do thy will, but why shouldst Thou regard mine? And yet, Thou hast promised that Thou wilt do the will of those who love Thee, fear Thee, and do thy holy will! Oh, Thou shalt be my only treasure, since my heart, oh my God, is thine! Oh, good and clement Master, who condescends to do the will of his servants! Oh, wicked and ungrateful servants, who object to do the will of so good a master!

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"I am in the midst of you, as he that serveth." *St. Luke*, xxii.

"For lo! the kingdom of God is within you." *St. Luke*, xvii.

"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." *St. Matt.* vi.

"He shall serve those who fear Him." *Psalms*, cxliv.

EIGHTH OF JANUARY.

Meditation.

ON FAITH, OF WHICH THE STAR SEEN BY THE MAGI, WAS THE SYMBOL.

1ST POINT. Reason is the light of men; faith is the light of Christians. Reason is necessary to men; faith is necessary to Christians. Alas! I am like a creature without a soul, since I obey only the dictates of reason. I am a heathen, possessed only of the name of a Christian.

God wishes to be honored by the mind as well as by the heart of man. The heart of man honors God by submitting to his law; the mind of man honors God by submitting to faith. His heart submits to it when he does those things to which its instincts are opposed; his mind submits when it does that which it cannot understand. Why is it, then, that in order to believe I wish to see, feel, and touch; like that incredulous disciple, who would not believe the divine word, until he had seen with his eyes and touched with his hands, and whose belief was at least doubtful and imperfect?

2D POINT. Faith consecrates the spirit of man, and leads him to submit joyfully to religion. It sacrifices itself to the glory of God; it unites itself to his wisdom; it causes the pure light of truth to shine with redoubled lustre, and renders its dogmas as

certain and infallible as the spirit of God, since God, dwelling in it, guides and governs it.

It is necessary, then, to live by faith, in order to be righteous; it is necessary to judge things by the light of faith, and not by the senses; it is necessary to love those things which the maxims of faith teach us, and not to follow, blindly, the maxims of the world; it is necessary to act by the direction of faith, and not according to the dictates of human prudence.

3D POINT. What does faith say of the grandeur of the world? That it is an abomination in the eyes of God. What does it say of riches? That it is impossible for him who loves them inordinately to be saved, and that it is difficult to possess them without loving them. What does it say of pleasure? That those who have their consolation and enjoyment in this world, shall know only misery and anguish in the world to come; that in order to be a Christian, it is necessary to crucify the flesh; that he who lives according to the flesh cannot please God, and shall suffer torments in hell, proportioned to his sensual indulgence on earth.

Do you believe these truths? If you do not believe them you are not a Christian; if you believe them, why is it that you live as if you do not believe them? You say you believe that, in order to be saved, you must become like a little child, and still you aspire after the greatness of the world; you believe that riches are an abomination to God, and yet you sigh for their possession; you believe that the humble poor are happy, and yet you fear poverty; you believe that there is nothing more salutary for the soul than suffering, and yet you murmur when God afflicts you, and seek only pleasure, only diversion, only the good things that gratify the senses. Why should you be accused and judged on the last day? He who believes not is already judged, says St. John, and he who believes, and acts contrary to his belief, is already condemned.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Behold he that is unbelieving, his soul shall not be right in himself: but the just shall live in his faith." *Habacuc*, ii.

"Ye that fear the Lord, believe him, and your reward shall not be made void." *Eccles.* ii.

"For the eyes of the Lord behold all the earth, and give strength to those who, with a perfect heart, trust in Him." 2 *Paralipomenon*, xvi.

"For we walk by faith, and not by sight." 2 *Corinthians*, v.

"But they who are in the flesh cannot please God." *Romans*, viii.

"For that which is high to man, is an abomination to God." *St. Luke*, xvi.

"But woe to you that are rich, for you have your consolation." *St. Luke*, vi.

"And again I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." *St. Matt.* xix.

NINTH OF JANUARY.

Meditation.

ON THE EXCELLENCE OF FAITH.

1st Point. Faith is a divine light which discovers to us the truths which will lead us to holiness, which preserves us in unity, which maintains us in humility, which sustains us in hope, which animates our charity, which disposes us to receive all grace, and causes us to merit eternal life.

Without faith the mind of man is profane, and devoid of religion; it wanders astray in its gratitude, and is bewildered by its own reasons; it lifts itself up above the light and inspirations of supernatural things, and refuses to do any thing to merit heaven; it works not for eternity; it does not submit to its first cause; it refuses obedience to its sovereign; it will never enjoy his presence, or see clearly that which it is not willing to believe humbly and blindly.

2d Point. Have you faith? Do you live according to its rules and maxims? Is your faith humble? Is it firm and general? Ah, why is it, then, that you have so many doubts and so much curiosity? why is it that you do not believe that God is ever present with you, although you can neither see or touch Him? why is it that you doubt his love, when He sends you affliction? why is it that you make a distinction in your belief? why is it that, in temptation, you tremble and lose courage, as if there was not a God to assist you?

3d Point. To obey the law of God it is necessary to renounce your own will; to obey the faith, which Christ has established, it is necessary to renounce all human reasoning. A man is not subject to God who desires to do only that which is agreeable to

himself; he is not the disciple of Jesus, who wishes to believe only that which is apparent to his own reason. To be a true servant of God, it is necessary to raise yourself above your natural inclinations, and to be his disciple, you must raise yourself above the pride of your own intellect.

Oh, my God! I believe in those mysteries of faith which I do not understand, and I love those things which are displeasing to my inclinations. I adore Thee by the submission of my thoughts, as I love Thee by the submission of my desires. I believe all those truths which Thou hast revealed, as I sincerely wish to do all that Thou hast commanded. I believe all, without doubt; I believe all, without reserve; I believe all, without curiosity; I desire no other reason or security for my implicit faith than the word of an Almighty God!

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"And I will espouse thee to me in faith, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord." *Osee*, ii.

"Abraham believed God, and it was reputed to him unto justice." *Romans*, iv.

"Shall not my soul be subject to God?" *Psalm* lxi.

TENTH OF JANUARY.

Meditation.

ON DIVINE INSPIRATION.

1st Point. Inspiration is a divine ray, which enlightens our minds and leads us to Jesus; it is the voice of God, which speaks to us, which counsels us, which exhorts us to penance, which threatens us; it is a breath of his spirit, a beam of his wisdom, and an expression of his love; it is a seed of heaven, which produces fruits unto eternal life; it is a bud of eternity, it is a cause of salvation, it is the price of the blood of Jesus Christ, it is a grace for which He suffered death.

2d Point. When you stifle an inspiration you silence the voice of God, you outrage his spirit, you imitate Herod, who killed John the Baptist, who was the voice of God; you imitate Saul, who put to death the priests who were the organs of the Divinity; you imitate the Jews, who crucified our dear Lord.

You who resist the inspirations of grace, resist the Holy Ghost.

You sin with knowledge, obstinacy, and malice; you bury the talent which God bestows on you; you abuse his gifts; you trample, as St. Paul says, his divine Son under your feet; you profane his blood; you outrage and irritate his spirit; you hold truth in captivity; you break asunder the series of graces which he had prepared for you; you place your salvation in imminent danger and peril!

3d Point. Are you not a disciple of Herod? How many times have you stifled the voice of God? How often have you put to death his Son, and his precursor? How often have you trampled his sacred blood under your sacrilegious feet? You have done all this, miserable soul, as often as you have suppressed the inspirations that enlightened your way, and which would have conducted you into the path of duty, and led you to the performance of good works, which would have strengthened you against evil, and filled your heart with celestial peace. Oh, my God! I fear that Thou wilt take from me the talents which I have slighted, and that the blood of thy Son will demand vengeance for my impurity and ingratitude.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Extinguish not the spirit." *Thessalonians*, v.

"To-day, if you shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts." *Psalm* xciv.

"Take not thy holy spirit from me." *Psalm* l.

"God hath spoken." *Psalm* lxi.

"I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me." *Psalm* lxxxiv.

"Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." 1 *Kings*, iii.

ELEVENTH OF JANUARY.

Meditation.

ON THE DANGER OF NOT RESISTING TEMPTATION.

1st Point. If the Magi had not followed the star, they would have died in their infidelity. If you do not obey those inspirations which enlighten your spirit and touch your heart, you will, perhaps, die in your sins. God keeps silence, after having spoken. He conceals himself, after having sought in vain; He retires, after having called and received no response; He abandons that soul into whose heart He has been refused admittance; He de-

spises after being despised; He punishes, after having endured for a length of time.

Oh, how often has he not called you, spoken to you, knocked at the door of your heart, waited for you, sought you, followed you, conjured you to abandon this sin, to correct this vice, to give yourself to Him, and to cease abusing his grace, by your contempt and neglect! How often have you not held truth captive in your mind, and refused to let it descend into your heart, and pass into your hands to strengthen them in the labor of your salvation!

2d Point. The justice of God will shine about you, or withdraw from you the talent which you have buried; it will come to transport you to an eternal kingdom of peace and love, or banish you forever from it. Oh, ungrateful heart! Oh, hardened heart! Oh, unfaithful heart! Oh, obstinate heart! It is done! God will speak to you no more, and his word shall never teach you again; the Holy Spirit will no longer breathe into your soul the loving and merciful whispers of grace; hope will no longer cheer you; the love of God no longer will abide in you; his fear will no longer restrain you. Your conscience will still torment you, but there will be no remedy to assuage your anguish. Men of God will no longer instruct or chide you. You have abused the grace of God, and He will take from you, that which you have, to return it no more forever!

Oh, my God! I know that I am not yet abandoned since I still hear thy voice which admonishes, and threatens me! And, notwithstanding this, I am a prodigal who has wasted all the goods which Thou hast given me; a Saul, who has put to death the priests who announced thy word to me; I am a Herod who has stifled thy voice, and despised all the precursors that Thou hast sent me!

3d Point. I do not wish Thee to wait any longer for me, oh my God! Thou hast borne with me many years, and now I will no longer resist thy grace, nor show myself rebellious to thy inspirations. I have long held thy truth captive; I will at once give it freedom. Thou hast long waited, and knocked at the door of my heart; I wish to open it to Thee this moment, that Thou mayest enter and reign there forever.

Thou commandest me to forsake this sin into which I fall so often. I will forsake it. Thou commandest me to change my life and renounce all the pleasures and diversions of the world. I renounce them with all my heart. Thou commandest me to be reconciled with my enemy, to see him, speak to him, pardon him.

I will be reconciled, I will forgive him all the injuries he has done me. Thou commandest me to frequent the sacraments: I will obey Thee. Thou commandest me to love Thee only: I will love Thee my God, and only Thee, in time and in eternity. Amen.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"And thou that despisest, shalt not thou also be despised?" *Isaias*, xxxiii.

"Because I called, and you refused; I stretched out my hand, and there was none that regarded. You have despised all my counsel, and have neglected my reprehensions. I will also laugh in your destruction; and mock when that shall come to you, which you feared." *Proverbs*, i.

"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" *Acts*, ix.

"I go my way, and you shall seek me, and you shall die in your sin." *John*, viii.

TWELFTH OF JANUARY.

Meditation.

ON THE WAYS OF GOD.

1st Point. The ways of God were not only admirable towards the Magi, but they are so towards all men. What could be more beautiful? what more just? what more perfect? what more certain? It is a way of grace, unknown to nature; a way of wisdom, incomprehensible to human reason; a way of peace that ensures tranquillity to the mind; a way of love that charms and delights the soul!

God works for us, when He seems against us. He is drawing near unto us, when He seems to be afar off. He advances our affairs, when his providence seems to have abandoned them to ruin. He enriches, when He seems to impoverish us; He saves us at the moment He seems to have forsaken us; He gives us life, when He seems to give us death. He leads us to peace by warfare; to perfection by the way of imperfection; to glory, through ignominy; to the promised land, through frightful deserts; to heaven by the road which seems farthest from it, and which appears to lead to hell!

2d Point. Teach me, oh my God! the way of my salvation, for I know it not. Is it by peace that I ought to seek it, or by war-

fare? is it by prosperity, or adversity? is it by glory, or ignominy? is it by abundance, or poverty? is it by health, or sickness? All this is unknown to me. It is in this, that Thou hast hidden all that is good and necessary for me, that my ignorance may be lost in thy wisdom, and my desires in thy will!

3d Point. Henceforth, oh my God, since it is thy pleasure, I will desire nothing except what Thou mayest see good for me, and wish only for those things which Thou desirest me to possess. I abandon myself entirely to thy providence, and accept with joy whatever Thou wilt order for me. I will walk without fear in the way Thou hast directed me to go, and be guided by thy wisdom, which shall be the star that will lead and govern me; I will welcome whatever Thou dost please to send me. Wherever Thou dost place me, there will I abide, without murmuring, unless thy own hand deliver me.

I shall henceforth be without choice or will, since I neither know what is best, or what is worst for me. I desire no more to ask for any thing, or refuse any thing. I wish to abandon myself entirely to Thee; oh my God, conduct me. I wish to rest in Thee; oh my God, sustain me. I wish to give myself to Thee; oh my God, receive me! Thou art my shepherd, and I am one of the sheep of thy fold. In following Thee I shall not be lost, or bewildered; in abandoning myself to Thee, I shall be eternally saved!

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"His ways are beautiful ways, and all his paths are peaceable." *Proverbs*, iii.

"Abraham went out, not knowing whither he went." *Hebrews*, xi.

"Make the way known to me, wherein I should walk." *Psalm* cxlii.

"For as the heavens are exalted above the earth, so are my ways exalted above your ways, and my thoughts above your thoughts." *Isaias*, lv.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

The Gospel. *St. John*, ii. 1–11.

"When Jesus was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem, according to the custom of the feast. And having fulfilled the days, when they returned, the child Jesus remained in Jerusalem,

and his parents knew it not. And thinking that He was in the company, they came a day's journey, and sought Him among their kinsfolks and acquaintance. And not finding Him, they returned into Jerusalem seeking Him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found Him in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard Him were astonished at his wisdom, and his answers. And seeing Him, they wondered. And his mother said to Him: Son, why hast Thou done so to us? behold, thy Father and I have sought Thee sorrowing. And He said to them: How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business? And they understood not the words that He spoke unto them. And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them. And his mother kept all these words in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and man."

Meditation.

ON THE LOSS OF GOD.

1st Point. What greater loss can we experience than the loss of God? It is as great an evil, as the possession of Him is an infinite and perfect good. He who possesses God possesses all; he who is so miserable as to lose God loses all. God is good in himself. He is the throne of all greatness; He is the centre of all motion; the source of all joy; the ocean of all consolation. Oh what greater calamity could befall us, than the loss of such a God! To possess an infinite number of worlds, and to lose them all, would be nothing in comparison with the loss of God!

God is the end of him who has possessed Him in life; He is his felicity, his peace, and his sovereign good. He, then, who loses God, is necessarily and absolutely miserable; he can have neither peace, repose, joy or consolation in his heart. His mind is incessantly agitated with doubts and inquietude. He is the type of a lost soul, since it is the loss of God, which is one of the bitterest pangs of hell. He dwells in an upper hell, and is in peril of falling into an abyss which is lower, which is eternal. Oh it is an unspeakable evil to lose God! It is to forego all the treasures of nature, of grace, and the glory of the world to come.

2d Point. How is it that we lose God? We lose Him entirely by mortal sin; we begin to lose Him by venial indulgences. We separate ourselves far from Him, by neglecting his inspira-

tions; we leave Him when we forget his law; we despise Him when we continue in lukewarmness; and we defy Him, by our presumption! God lives in the soul by a grace of union, by a grace of counsel, by a grace of protection, by a grace of consolation. But mortal sin dissolves the beautiful union of the soul with God; venial sin weakens it; unfaithfulness shakes it; God is no longer in the soul, as He was; He directs it no more; He protects it no longer; He consoles it no more; his love no longer abides with it. Oh what a frightful evil, is mortal sin, which causes us to love God; and venial sin, which separates Him from us!

3D POINT. Judas, what have you done? You have received the silver, but you have lost God! My soul, how often have you not lost Him! How frequently have you not sold Him for a place of honor, for a momentary pleasure, for a sordid gain, for an imaginary good, for a handful of barley, or for a piece of bread, as the Holy Scriptures say! Does He now dwell in your soul by grace? Are you not in the guilt of mortal sin? Are you faithful in following the path He has marked out for you? Do you implore his protection? Do you not seek too much consolation?

Oh that I could weep, and weep incessantly! I have lost the light and essence of all beauty! My heart, how is it that you do not break with grief, for having lost your God, your Father, your spouse, your king, your peace, your good, your all! Alas! like David, I will weep night and day. Where—they say to me—'where is thy God?' What have you done with him? Where have you placed him?

You have lost Him, miserable wretch, by your pride, by your avarice, by your sensuality! You have driven Him from you by your unfaithfulness and negligence!

Daughters of Jerusalem! tell me where is your well beloved, that I may go and find Him, for I am resolved to seek Him, above all, and repair the great loss I have sustained by my ingratitude and perfidy.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"My tears have been bread day and night, while it is said to me, where is thy God?" *Psalm* xli.

"Hear O ye heavens, and give ear O earth, for the Lord hath spoken. I have brought up children and exalted them; but they have despised me." *Isaias*, i.

"Be astonished, O ye heavens; for my people have done two

evils. They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and have digged to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns which hold no water." *Jeremias*, ii.

FOURTEENTH OF JANUARY.

Meditation.

HOW TO FIND GOD AFTER HAVING LOST HIM.

1st Point. We lose God by sin, and find Him again only through repentance. The indulgence of only one bad desire of the heart is sufficient to separate Him from us. One sigh of true contrition is sufficient to restore Him to us. One tear is of such great value that it enables us to find God after having lost Him. One cannot recover a lost treasure, or restore a dead child to life, by shedding thousands of tears; but the shedding of one single tear of repentance, restores God to you! Oh, admirable virtue of repentance! Oh, precious tears! Oh, how insensible I am to shed so many for transitory griefs, and not spare one for the loss of God, for the desolation of my own soul! Is it thus with you?

2d Point. One can find God, after losing Him, by seeking Him as the Blessed Virgin did; with grief, with diligence, with care, with sorrow, with humility, and devotion. You cannot find Him in the world, in public places, or among friends and acquaintances, but you will have to go up to the temple, where He sits in the midst of the doctors. You will there find Him, and after He is found, it will be easy to obtain all that you want, for He has promised, that he who seeks shall find; he who asks shall receive; he who knocks at the door of mercy, it shall be opened unto him. Do you seek Him whom you have lost? At what time? In what place? In what manner?

3d Point. One regains his union with God, by flying from himself; he recovers his special devotion, by obedience to the precepts of the Church; the divine protection, by fidelity in little things; heavenly consolation, by the mortification of his mind and body. One loses the infinite grace of his presence, by dissipation of heart, by too free an expression of opinion, by an indiscriminate disclosure of the mind, by the tumult of passions, by traffic with the world, by vain devices, and by curiosity; one recovers God by recollection, by solitude, by detachment from creatures, by peace, and by silence.

Oh my Jesus! Oh most sweet Jesus! Heretofore Thou hast reigned in my heart, as on thy throne of grace, as in the temple of thy glory, as in the sanctuary of thy spirit, as in the habitation of thy chosen one. In thy presence my soul reposed in peace, and sought no other good. In Thee was my joy, and Thou didst satisfy me with heavenly delights. But, my God! I know not where Thou art, or where I am! Thou hast abandoned me, or rather I have lost Thee. Alas! I behold myself in a frightful desert, without a drop of water to refresh me; without a friendly shadow where I may repose! Oh, Fountain of living waters, where shall I search for Thee? Where wilt Thou reveal thy refreshing presence to my soul, which is fainting with thirst and weariness? I seek Thee above all things, and shall find no repose until I find Thee!

I have at last found my Beloved; I found Thee in the temple; I will keep Thee, and will never let Thee go.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"We have sought Thee, sorrowing." *St. Luke*, ii.

"Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near." *Isaias*, lv.

"Seek ye the Lord, and be strengthened; seek his face evermore." *Psalm* civ.

"I sought Him, and I found Him not." *Cant.* iii.

"Show me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest, and where thou liest at mid-day." *Cant.* i.

"They found Him in the temple." *St. Luke*, ii.

"I found Him whom my soul loveth, I held Him, and I will not let Him go." *Cant.* iii.

FIFTEENTH OF JANUARY.

Meditation.

MOTIVES FOR REPENTANCE.

1st Point. The past affords four motives for repentance. First, The sins which you have committed against God, against your neighbor, and against yourself. Secondly, The good which you have omitted to perform; the little care you have taken to correct your vices, to acquire virtue, and to advance in perfection. Thirdly, The time which you have lost, which is of all things the

most precious, and the most irreparable when gone. Fourthly, Jesus Christ, our Lord, whose life you have destroyed in your own heart, and in the hearts of your brethren who are yet on earth; and in the hearts of those who are now dead, whose damnation you have perhaps occasioned by your evil counsels, your solicitations, and bad example. Oh what subjects for grief! Oh what motives for repentance! Where will you find tears enough to efface the innumerable sins you have committed? How will you recover sufficient time to make reparation for the good works you have omitted? how will you restore the life of a God whom your sins have slain in your heart? how can you bring out of hell the souls which you have precipitated therein forever? Jerusalem weep, strike your breast with grief, put off your garments of rejoicing, and cover yourself with sackcloth, for in your proud city is slain the Saviour of Israel!

2d Point. The present affords you two other causes of sorrow, confusion and repentance. First, The multitude of gifts that God has bestowed on you, which you have not profited by, which you do not prize, and which you do not improve. Secondly, The insatiable longing you have for sinful pleasures; the corruption of your own heart; the fragility of your flesh; the illusion of your senses; the snares that the devil spreads about your way; the allurements of the world, which surround you on every side.

What will you wish to have done when it is too late? What will you not wish to have suffered? Will you have time for penance at the hour of death? Oh my God, my Saviour, I am overwhelmed with confusion, when I see myself so sinful, so ungrateful, so hardened in vice, so attached to the world, so eager to live! Oh my Lord Jesus! take from me the treasures which I abuse, and leave me the evils which I merit; change my life by thy grace, or let me no longer live to offend and defy Thee.

3d Point. The future proposes to you four terrible things for consideration, which should oblige you to do penance without delay. The first is Death, and the hour of its coming. One is inevitable, and the time of the other uncertain; but it constantly advances, and may be nearer at this moment than you dream of. The second is your Judge, before whom you must appear; whom you cannot deceive, who is inflexible, and whom you cannot avoid. The third is Hell, whose agonies shall be general, without consolation; continual, without interruption; eternal, without end. The fourth is Heaven, which will deliver you from every evil; which will fill you with every perfect joy; and the possession of which will be eternal!

Oh forever! oh eternity! which shall never cease! If one thinks of eternity he will never sin. Oh heaven! how full of sweetness and holiness is the thought of heaven! oh hell, how full of bitterness and horror is the thought of hell! Oh time, how short! oh eternity, how endless! Living always and never dying; dying always and never living! Behold the recompense of the good! behold the portion of the wicked. Both wait on death. Death waits on life; life depends on a moment!

Be wise, oh Christian soul, think of the past; consider the present, and prepare for the future.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"If Thou, O Lord, wilt mark iniquities, Lord, who shall stand it?" *Psalm* cxxix.

"To the penitent He hath given the way of justice, and He hath strengthened them that were fainting in patience." *Eccles.* xvii.

"I attended and hearkened: no man speaketh what is good: there is none that doeth penance, saying: What have I done?" *Jeremias*, viii.

"Behold, the day of thy death is nigh." *Deut.* xxxi.

"Be penitent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." *Acts*, iii.

SIXTEENTH OF JANUARY.

Meditation.

ON THE DUTIES OF FATHERS AND MOTHERS TO THEIR CHILDREN AND OF SUPERIORS TO THEIR INFERIORS.

1st Point. God blesses a man with children, that he may lead them into the ways of righteousness, and teach them how to perform those works by which they will merit eternal life. If it is his duty to provide nourishment for their bodies, how much more should he care for the nourishment of their souls! He deserves not to be a father who cannot govern properly those entrusted to him by God; nor should he give life to the body if he cannot impart it to the soul.

At first, children are controlled by their instincts, but in the course of time their reason is developed, and it is then that pious instructions render them rational, Christian, and faithful. Un

happy indeed are those children whose fathers and mothers forgive nothing to; more unhappy still are they to whom every thing is forgiven by their parents. Are you harsh and unrelenting to the defects of your children, or are you indulgent and yielding to all their faults and errors? Into which extreme have you fallen?

2d Point. In educating the hearts and minds of your children, you should blend sweetness and compassion with your severity, and thus imitate God, who is the most severe, as He is the most tender and merciful of parents. Are you not too severe in your conduct? Are you not over-indulgent towards them? Do you love your children? Have you taught them to confide in and love you? Do they fear you too much? Do they fear you too little?

3d Point. It is not judicious or right to punish a child on every provocation, nor is it proper to excuse him on every occasion. It is not always necessary to remain silent, nor is it of importance always to speak. Every excess should be feared and avoided. Never chastise a child, or an inferior, when you are under the influence of anger. A physician who is suffering under delirium, or any other violent disorder, should be first healed himself before he attempts to prescribe remedies for others. A father who corrects a child when he is under the effects of passion, deserves chastisement himself, much more than the culprit he punishes. The penalty of a misdemeanor is a remedy which should be administered at the proper moment, and in a judicious manner. A chastisement corrects an evil, and imparts strength to the spirit, when it is just and moderate; but when administered too frequently, and without sufficient cause, produces contempt and hardihood.

In what manner do you conduct yourself on this point towards your children and inferiors?

SEVENTEENTH OF JANUARY.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. If you desire to train your children properly, and preserve harmony in your family, it is necessary that you should love all impartially. An exhibition of partiality is the cause of

much bitter discord. Why should you make a difference where nature has made none? Why do you violate the rights which wisdom has established in the world? Are not the branches of the same tree all instinct with the same life, and clothed in the same foliage? Are you astonished and dissatisfied because your inferiors regard their equals with more affection than they do yourself?

Nature is governed in its choice by inclination: charity loves without inclination, and even against the natural inclinations of the heart. It is natural to love those who are the most virtuous and amiable, in a higher degree than others; but your preference must be concealed, lest it arouse jealousy in the minds of those who have an equal natural right to your affection. It is necessary to imitate God, who loves the good more than the wicked, but who often permits a higher degree of temporal prosperity to attend them than waits on the good. The just envy not the temporal treasures of the wicked; nor do sinners covet the spiritual goods of the just. It is thus that you ought to love your children and inferiors, with a patient and impartial love. Do you love them according to these rules? Are you not indulgent, tender, and affectionate towards some, and severe, harsh, and unloving towards others? Have you not a cherished favorite, towards whom you testify such undue affection as to arouse the vindictive and jealous feelings of the rest? Works are more eloquent than language; example is more powerful than precept. Can you teach those things of which you are ignorant, or defend that which you do? The child places more implicit faith in what he sees than in what he hears. He has but little doubt of his ability to do those things which he sees performed by his instructor. He seeks his glory and perfection in imitating you. Thus all your sins become the scandal and inheritance of iniquity, which pass from generation to generation of your descendants! Nature is corrupt, and is inclined to imitate evil more readily than that which is good, especially when it is clothed with power and authority. Examine yourself on this point, for God will require at your hands the souls which He has given you. As you have done towards them, so shall you be rewarded.

3d Point. Instruct your children and inferiors with care; chastise them in moderation; love all impartially, at least appear to do so; be not influenced by your inclinations; consent not to their disorder; correct them not in anger; beware, and do not flatter their passions; do not, by weak indulgence, increase their vices, or preserve and strengthen divisions among them. Forgive

when it is necessary; chastise when it is proper and judicious to do so.

Masters! regard your servants with the same feelings of responsibility to God as you do your children! They are not your children by birth, but they are by position and adoption. God has made them dependent on you for instruction and support, and you should counsel, correct, and govern them, affording them always in your own deportment a good example, as if they were your children. If you are deficient in these duties, at the day of judgment your children and servants will testify against you, they will accuse you, they will condemn you. How will you reply to them? How will you excuse the violation of so sacred a trust to God?

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Hast thou children? instruct them." *Eccles.* vii.

"Good instruction shall give grace." *Prov.* xiii.

"He that loveth his son correcteth him betimes." *Ibid.*

"But he that shall scandalize one of these little ones, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea." *Matt.* xviii.

"Fathers! provoke not your children to anger. *Ephesians*, vi.

THE EIGHTEENTH OF JANUARY.

Meditation.

ON THE OBEDIENCE WE OWE TO GOD.

1st Point. God was obedient to man, and man is not willing to be obedient to God. God submitted to man, and man is not willing to submit to God. Consider who it was that obeyed, and who it was that He obeyed! In what He obeyed, and how often He obeyed. In what manner He obeyed. He who obeyed, was a God! those whom He obeyed were his creatures! He obeyed them in all things. He obeyed them without murmurs and with respect. He obeyed them during his life on earth. And you, who are the creature of his hands; you who are nothingness, a slave, a sinner, are unwilling to obey your King, your Father and your God! If you obey Him, is it not an obedience without love, and of brief continuance, which is gladly forsaken for the service of the devil?

2d Point. Who has so good a right to gather and enjoy the

fruits of a vine as he who has planted and nourished it? who has so indisputable a right to live in a house as he who has erected it? who is so much entitled to the service of a slave as he who has purchased and paid an infinite price for him? Is it not God who has given you being? is it not He who has formed you with his hands? is it not He who has purchased you with his own blood? Have you not vowed allegiance to Him at the Baptismal Font? have you not promised to obey Him, your Lord and King? How numberless are the blessings which He has bestowed on you! How innumerable the evils from which He has delivered you! What is there that you cannot hope from Him? What have you not to fear, if you do not obey Him?

3d Point. You must of necessity obey God or the devil! What comparison is there between these two masters? God is your king; the devil is your tyrant. God loves you with an infinite love; the devil hates you with an infinite malice. God can bestow on you eternal treasures; the devil eternal evils! Those who serve God are rewarded with the joys of eternal life; those who serve the devil are always at war with God, and know no rest in time or eternity. Which of these masters do you obey?

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"The Lord, your God, He is the God of gods, and the Lord of lords, a great God, and mighty, and terrible." *Deut.* x.

If then I be a father, where is my honor? and if I be a master, where is my fear?" *Malachias*, i.

NINETEENTH OF JANUARY.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. God does not demand impossibilities from us: his yoke is sweet and his burden easy. He commands you to love Him with your whole heart: is there any thing more just? He commands you to love your neighbor as yourself: is there any thing more meritorious? All that God requires of us is condensed in these two commandments, "Love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and thy neighbor as thyself."

2d Point. Oh law of my God! thou art sweet, thou art reasonable, thou art useful, and profitable to those who are faithful

in its observance! Oh my God! I find no pleasure, but in walking in the way of thy commandments. I have nothing of any value, except in the treasury of thy love, and am as one vanquished in the spoils of thy enemy.

Answer me, my soul! do you submit to God? Is it not just that you should obey Him, who gave you life? who has preserved it through dangers seen, and unseen, and who can destroy it when He pleases; who has filled you with blessings; who has promised you infinite joys; and who will make you miserable in time and in eternity, unless you obey Him?

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Shall not my soul be subject to the Lord, for from Him is my salvation?" *Psalm* lxi.

"Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not the fruit thereof?" 1 *Corinthians*, ix.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

THE GOSPEL. *St. John*, ii. 1–11.

"AT that time there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus also was invited, and his disciples to this marriage. And the wine failing, the mother of Jesus saith to Him: They have no wine. And Jesus saith to her: Woman, what is it to me, and to thee? my hour is not yet come. His mother saith to the waiters: Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye. Now, there were set there six water pots of stone, according to the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three measures apiece. Jesus saith to them: Fill the water pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And Jesus saith to them: Draw out now, and carry to the chief steward of the feast. And they carried it. And when the chief steward had tasted the water, made wine, and knew not whence it was, but the waiters knew who had drawn the water; the chief steward calleth the bride-groom, and saith to him: Every man, at first, setteth forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse. But thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed in Him."

Meditation.

ON WHAT PASSED AT THE WEDDING FEAST.

1st Point. Jesus was present at the marriage in Cana, to authorize it, to consecrate it, to sanctify it, and to perform amidst those who were present with Him at the feast, the first of his miracles; to relieve the wants of the guests; and make known to his Church, that the intercession of his blessed mother, was all powerful with Him. He was accompanied by her, because He wished her to co-operate in all the blessings, and graces, which He imparted to men. He ate with modesty, He entertained the guests with holy discourses; He was made sorrowful by excesses and loose language. Invite Jesus and his holy mother to your bridal, to your feast, to your amusements, to your recreations, to your designs, to all your affairs: be silent in his presence, attend to his counsels, and all will be well with you.

2d Point. They had not wine enough at the feast, and Jesus turned water into wine. Never have we more cause to hope in God, than when all seems wanting, and likely to disappear. Never will you taste of heavenly consolations, as long as you relish those which are earthly. It is necessary to present the water to the Son of God, for Him to convert it into wine. If in a spirit of obedience and humility you do all that you can, He will do the rest, and supply whatever may be deficient. He demanded bread, in the desert, that He might multiply it; and water at the marriage feast, that He might turn it into wine. It is necessary to hope in God, but sinful and presumptuous to tempt Him. He tempts God who, like the devil, demands a miracle of Him, without having done any good work to merit a manifestation of his power or love.

2d Point. Going to Holy Communion is going to the marriage feast. It is held in the heart of each one who communicates. Invite Mary to be present at your espousals with her divine Son. Represent your wants, your miseries, your necessities to her consideration, and say: "Blessed Lady, the wine of love and devotion is wanting for the feast; I have only a little cold and insipid water to honor thy Son's presence, I therefore implore thee to ask Him to convert it into wine. He will do it if thou dost wish it; and it is only necessary, gracious Lady, for thee to express thy desire for Him to accomplish it. And if, while on earth, thou couldst prevail with Him by a single word to work so great a

miracle, how much more will He do at thy request, now that thou reignest in heaven with Him, if thou wilt make known to Him my necessities."

Rejoice and be glad, O my soul! we are going to the marriage feast, to the feast of the Lamb. Why is it that you are sad? What is it that you fear? Why should you go to your espousals trembling and weeping? You are invited to the marriage feast of a God; you will there partake of the bread of angels; you will become the spouse of Christ! And you approach the holy banquet as if you were being led to ignominy and death. Listen to what this spouse says: "Eat, O my friends, drink and be inebriated, my dearly beloved." The wine that God has given us to drink on earth is mixed with some bitterness, it can only be pure in the kingdom of heaven; but these consolations, though a little bitter, are infinitely more sweet than all the pleasures of this unreal life. Blessed are they, who are invited to the marriage feast of the Lamb.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"The mother of Jesus saith to Him, They have no wine." *St. John*, ii.

"Hear me, and I will show thee over whom the devil can prevail." *Tobias*, vi.

"The king hath brought me into his store-rooms, we will be glad and rejoice." *Cant.* i.

"Eat, O my friends, and drink and be inebriated, O my beloved." *Cant.* v.

"Blessed are they who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb." *Apoc.* xix.

SECOND MONDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Meditation.

ON THE GOSPEL OF SUNDAY.

1st Point. They made a marriage feast in Cana of Galilee, and Jesus was invited. Men invite Jesus to their banquets, and Jesus invites men to his feast. Jesus condescends to assist at the banquets of men, and men do not wish to assist at his. This feast is the Holy Communion, and the Son of God is the spouse of my soul. This marriage is more perfect than can be well im-

agined, since man becomes not only of the same body, but of the same spirit with our dear Lord. It is indissoluble on his part, but not so on ours. He gives us all the rich treasures of his grace, and love, without reserve. If Christians reserve to themselves any thing which is his due, it is through a spirit of infidelity, which does not correspond with the love of Jesus Christ. Oh, what grief for Him! Oh, what confusion for us! Do you receive this heavenly spouse without reservation, and with humble fidelity?

2d Point. Those who come to this marriage feast with fear and trembling know not the divine goodness of Him who invites them, nor the honor He does them, nor the blessings He offers them. Those who receive with too much boldness are ignorant of the grandeur, the holiness, and dignity of Him whom they receive. "My friend," He will say to them, "where is thy wedding garment?" This wedding garment can be purchased only on two conditions. Your soul must be in a state of grace, and your conscience cleansed from all known mortal sin. You must be at peace with all the world, and at enmity with no man. Which are you? Are you a timid and distrustful bride, who dares not approach her divine spouse? Are you a bold and presumptuous one, who approaches Him without the nuptial robe of grace and charity?

Oh, Jesus my Saviour, Thou hast done me the honor to invite me to thy wedding feast! Thou dost threaten me with thy anger if I do not approach it worthily. What course shall I take? If I eat not at thy table, Thou hast declared that I shall not have life in me; if I receive Thee unworthily, thy apostle declares that I eat and drink judgment to myself. I desire eternal life, and the thought of being damned fills me with horror. It is necessary, then, that I should receive Thee often, and receive Thee worthily.

3d Point. When you invite Jesus and his holy Mother to your marriage feast, you should not undertake any thing without having asked, and received with humble faith, their benediction, which changes water into wine, and causes all to go on without difficulty or disturbance. When you make choice of a state of life, or engage in any employment, design or plan, without first inviting Jesus and Mary to consecrate it by their presence, the wine changes into water, and you find nothing but sorrow, disappointment, and affliction. God disappears from you; poverty becomes your portion; the course of grace is stopped, and the mind is filled with trouble; the heart struggles with its own bitterness, and the

passions are thrown into wild disorder. Know, O Christian soul, what a sinful and bitter thing it is to forsake the Lord your God, and despise the counsels of his wisdom!

Never act through the impulse of passion. Ask the counsel of wise and virtuous men, and if at any time your pursuits have been bad and sinful, receive for your penance the pains and difficulties of your state in life, and by your humility and patience satisfy the justice of God, that He may once more receive you into his favor, and restore you to his love.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"The kingdom of heaven is like to a man, being a king, who made a marriage for his son. And he sent his servants to call them that were invited to the marriage, and they would not come." *St. Matt.* xxii.

"A certain man made a great supper, and invited many. And they began all at once to make excuses." *Luke*, xiv.

"But I say to you, that none of those men that were called shall taste of my supper." *Ibid.*

"Bring in hither the poor and the feeble, and the blind and the lame." *Ibid.*

"Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you." *John*, vi.

SECOND TUESDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Meditation.

ON A STATE OF LIFE.

1st Point. The Church is a body, of which Jesus Christ is the head, and all the faithful are members. Each one is gifted with different functions, though all are animated by the same spirit. The good and perfection of a member consists in remaining contentedly in the place which God has assigned him, and in performing well the duties of its state. If the hand wishes to be in the place of the eye, and the eye wishes to be where the hand is, these two become burdensome, and disturb the good order and harmony of the body; and being, through perversity, without nourishment, because they are engaged in an unnatural war, they become lifeless, and are a scandal to the other members, and an

offence to their head. This is the comparison which is made by the Apostle St. Paul.

It is the same with all men. God has assigned to each one a place and function in his Church, and to each state He has attached peculiar blessings for those who are faithful. If we are in the state, or engaged in the employment or occupation which God has chosen for us, we enjoy a profound peace; we rest under his protection; we are nourished by his grace; we are enriched by his blessings; and work out our salvation with but little pain, and infallibly arrive at perfection.

On the contrary, if we refuse to accept the vocation to which God has appointed us, or if we are unfaithful to it, we suffer as many pangs as a limb which, through some accident, has been wrenched out of place. We are continually tormented by evil spirits, who have power over a soul that is out of its proper sphere of action. We are no longer under the protection of God, since we have withdrawn from his guidance, and voluntarily left his watchful providence. We fall often and grievously, because we are unsustained by the grace which belongs to the state in which God desires us to be. We have nothing left on which to found the hopes of being restored and recognized by Him, except penance and a sincere sorrow for our wanderings. But when one defers his repentance and return too long, God, in his anger, cuts him off, as a contaminated member, and casts him into hell.

2d Point. Behold that which causes the damnation of so many souls! Without consulting God, they throw themselves, at the suggestion of their passions, into various states of life, for which they have no vocation; they become weary of remaining in the place He has assigned them, and of performing the duties connected with it; they aspire to a position for which they have neither the capacity or talent. Thus they lose their devotion, neglect their prayers, and give themselves no trouble to seek God; and if they do seek Him, they find an angry God, who reproaches them incessantly for their infidelity, and for the contempt they have shown his service. They hear a voice, which admonishes them day and night, from the depths of their souls: "You are not where God designed you to be. You are not doing that which He ordered you to do. It is not He who has sent you to this place. It is not He who has given you this commission. Instead of recompense, you shall receive from Him only severe chastisements."

Are you not one of these miserable ones? Are you in the state, or engaged in the occupation, or in that place, wherein God

wishes you to be? Have you not chosen the place where He does not desire you to be? Have you not obliged your superiors to submit to your will? Have you not abandoned the watchful care of Providence? Oh Jonah! God sent you to Nineveh, and you wish to go to Tarsus! You were buffeted by the tempest, cast into the sea, and swallowed by a monster of the deep! Behold what shall come on those who abandon God, to follow their own passions and inclinations! They shall be tossed, like Jonah, by continual tempests. They will remain, like one in a lethargy, in the hold of their vessels, unconscious of sickness, or danger, until they perish in the stormy sea, and are swallowed up in hell! *Know thou, and see, that it is a bitter and fearful thing for thee to have left the Lord thy God, when He desired to lead thee in the way of salvation, and that my fear is not with thee, saith the Lord God of Hosts.*

Oh my God! my God! have pity on me; restore to me the peace that I have lost by my disobedience. Since I have departed from thy guidance, all creatures are against me; I toil unceasingly and succeed with nothing. Wherever I turn, I find only crosses, tribulation, contradictions, and afflictions of mind and body; and that which crushes me down under my misfortunes more than every thing else, is, that my soul is, as it were, in hell, without light, strength, or consolation! Thou hast abandoned me because I first abandoned Thee. Oh Lord, my God! be merciful to me, for I recognize my fault. Cause me to enter again into the order of thy Providence and grace, through the rigors of thy justice. Have compassion, dear Lord, on a poor wandering sheep who is in danger of being devoured by the enemy of souls. Receive me into thy fold, oh my sweet Jesus! my Shepherd! Grant me this grace, and I will serve Thee faithfully all the days of my life. Whatever betide me, I vow never to leave Thee or forsake Thee again.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"He that dwelleth in the aid of the Most High, shall abide under the protection of God." *Psalm* xc.

"See if there be in me the way of iniquity, and lead me in the eternal way." *Psalm* cxxxix.

"Hath not this been done to thee, because thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, at that time when He led thee by the way." *Jeremias*, ii.

"What hast thou to do in the land of Egypt, to drink the troubled water?" *Ibid.*

"Thy own wickedness shall reprove thee, and thy apostasy shall rebuke thee." *Ibid.*

"Know, then, and see that it is an evil and a bitter thing for thee to have left the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not with thee, saith the Lord, the God of Hosts." *Ibid.*

SECOND WEDNESDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Meditation.

ON SPIRITUAL JOY.

1st Point. It is the privilege only of good men to rejoice, because they have a good conscience, which, says Holy Writ, is like a perpetual feast to them, for they always possess God, being at peace with Him, and their joy is inexhaustible because He is its source, and they always live in his presence, who makes the felicity of heaven and of earth; because they are under his divine protection, which constitutes their peace and assurance; because they receive continual marks of his favor, by the loving-kindness He shows towards them; because they have almost evident signs of their predestination; and an assurance almost certain of their salvation, which of all things in the world is the most consoling. Ah, why is it then, Christian soul, that you are cast down? Do you doubt the goodness of God? Do you doubt his love? Do you doubt the price and the value of the blood of his Son? Do you believe that He desires the damnation of those whose salvation has cost Him so much, and for which He has sacrificed his only Son?

2d Point. The joy of the wicked is false and shameful, it is vain and impure, and superficial. It is mixed with much bitterness; it is transitory, and its fruits are eternal sighs and tears. Have you ever found true joy in creatures? Have you ever found solace in sin? Oh my God! Thou hast ordained it to be so, that the sinner finds his own punishment in his sin! Good men are afflicted in the world, but it is in affliction that they are most contented, because they know that it is then God is bestowing on them sensible marks of his love, and they reciprocate it, by giving Him marks of their fidelity. It is not in prosperity that we know our friend, but in adversity. God proves his servants. He leads them, like the soldiers of Gideon, to the waters of tribulation, but after having proved their courage, their patience, love, and fidel-

ity, He fills them with joy, and obliges them to cry out, like St. Francis Xavier, "It is enough, oh my God, it is enough!"

What greater honor could we have than to suffer for Christ? What greater consolation than to receive pledges of our salvation, and to participate in the sufferings of so good a master? It is this which renders good men so resigned in their pains, their griefs, their afflictions, and their misfortunes.

Are you a servant of Jesus Christ, you who murmur and esteem yourself miserable, when any misfortune happens to you? Oh, my God! how great and abundant is the consolation that Thou hast reserved for those who truly love Thee! Sinners seek for delights only in sensible things, but as for me, I will rejoice only in God, and in Jesus my Saviour.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Rejoice in the Lord always, again, I say rejoice." *Philippians*, iv.

"Rejoice in this, that your names are written in heaven." *Luke*, x.

"Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, because your reward is very great in heaven." *St. Matt.* v.

"This I know from the beginning: the praise of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment." *Job*, xx.

"Woe to you that laugh now: for you shall mourn and weep." *Luke*, vi.

SECOND THURSDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. The joy of good men does honor to God; it is an unmistakable proof that they serve a good master. Others, who see their joy and satisfaction, are won to his service; for all men love happiness, as they love life. The wicked wear out their patience, in searching after it; but they seek in vain for it in the service of a cruel master. But when they repent and enter into the service of God, their fears and disquietude vanish, and they rejoice in a peace which they had never before conceived.

2d Point. A servant of God who is morose and unhappy dishonors his master, disgraces his service, inspires horror for devotion, and a contempt for virtue. He causes the wicked to believe

that the yoke of the Son of God is insupportable, and that it will profit them more to serve the devil. What do you say, base and unfaithful servant? What is the cause of this sinking? Do you serve a tyrant? Is not God sufficient for your happiness? Who can satisfy you if God cannot? "Retire from me," the Son of God will say to all such: "you disgrace my service, you defame me; I honor my father, and you dishonor me. To serve me acceptably, you must serve me freely, and cheerfully; otherwise, you are an offence to me."

3d Point. To possess spiritual joy, it is necessary to have a good conscience. It is necessary to have a heart detached from creatures, for their loss troubles and afflicts those who love them. It is necessary to abandon one's self to the will of God, and rest under his direction. It is necessary to desire nothing with eagerness, but feel an indifference to all. It is necessary to love suffering, to fly from the pleasures of earth, and not to seek consolation in the gratification of sensuality; for sensual joy drives out spiritual joy. Finally, it is necessary to be always recollected in God, to dwell on the benefits He has bestowed on us, and consider the great and unspeakable good which He has prepared for us.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." *Luke*, i.

Does your soul glorify God, as did the Blessed Virgin's, and does your spirit rejoice in the Lord, as hers did?

"I am filled with comfort, I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulations." 2 *Corinthians*, vii.

If you love God as St. Paul did, you will rejoice in the midst of sufferings and complain, only because you have so little to suffer.

"I set the Lord always in my sight, for He is always at my right hand, that I be not moved. Therefore, my heart hath been glad and my tongue hath rejoiced; moreover, my flesh shall rest in hope." *Psalm* xv.

My God! what joy, always to consider Thee present at our right hand, to perfect us in our hearts, and console us in affliction!

"Rejoice in the Lord, O ye just; praise becometh the upright." *Psalm* xxxii.

If your heart is in anger and bitterness, it cannot praise God; it is a sign that He is not at your right hand.

SECOND FRIDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Meditation.

ON ARIDITY AND DRYNESS.

1st Point. I believe that which I see. I hope for that which is possible to me. I love that which delights me. I believe in the light. I hope in strength. I rejoice in consolation. Behold the life of the senses.

I believe that which I do not see. I hope for that which seems unattainable. I love that which does not please me. I believe amidst the darkness. I hope amidst weakness. I rejoice in the midst of sorrow. Behold the life of the Spirit. There is a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to laugh, and a time to weep; a time for winter, and a time for summer; a time for rain, and a time for drought; a time for peace, and a time for war; a time for consolation, and a time for desolation.

Winter is as necessary to the earth, as summer; night, as day; rain, as sunshine. The soul loves consolation, but does not merit it, unless it has been tried by temptation. It is in darkness that we ought to see shining the light of faith; it is in abandonment that we ought to depend on his constancy; it is in desolation, that we ought to trust in his love!

2d Point. Oh, my God! my devotion is sensual and natural! It is impure and selfish! I do not adore Thee in spirit, since I seek only the gratification of my senses! I do not lead a supernatural life, since I do not raise myself above the inclinations of a natural life. I do not, up to this moment, merit any thing; since I have done nothing, nor suffered any thing contrary to my own will.

3d Point. Oh, happy state! wherein the soul sees God without light; hopes in God, without support; loves God, without consolation; works for God, without pleasure. It is beholding God, without species; it is being united to God, without medium; it is feeling divine things; it is no longer subsisting by one's self, but by a divine subsistence; it is leading a supernatural life; it is the life and reign of Jesus Christ!

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"And after darkness I hope for light again." *Job*, xvii.
"And I have made my bed in darkness." *Ibid.*

"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but justice and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." *Romans*, xiv.

"God is a spirit, and they that adore Him must adore Him in spirit and truth." *St. John*, iv.

"They shall be scattered abroad to eat, and shall murmur if they are not filled." *Psalm* lviii.

SECOND SATURDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

SPIRITUAL CANTICLE.

1st Point. Say to me, my well beloved, where is it that Thou takest thy repose and thy repast? It is in a pure and detached heart: there I repose and find the paradise of my delights.

Let there be stillness in the house of God, and silence in paradise. Lord, since Thou hast spoken I have lost the power of speech, I am full of thoughts, but have no words to express them.

Oh, my heart, guard well the treasure that you possess! The spouse enters; the gates are closed: He came when they were open. Peace, love, secrecy, and silence. Behold in these things a defence which will keep your soul in safety.

2d Point. Retire from me, my well beloved, but do not stay long away. Withdraw from me thy presence, but not thy love. Withdraw from me thy consolation, but not thy sufferings. Withdraw thy paradise from my soul, or draw me into thy paradise!

I can receive no joy if I am not attached to thy cross. If Thou dost not give me suffering, excess of joy will cause me to die. It is too much sweetness: it is too little grief. Oh, my God! my love! All my rejoicing is in tribulation; all my desire is to depart and be with Thee.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

The Gospel. *Matt.* viii. 1–13.

"At that time when Jesus was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him; and, behold, a leper came and adored Him, saying: Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, stretching forth his hand, touched him, saying: I will; be thou made clean. And forthwith his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith to him: See thou tell no man; but

go show thyself to the priest and offer the gift which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. And when He had entered into Capharnaum, there came to Him a centurion, beseeching Him, and saying: Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, and is grievously tormented. And Jesus saith to him: I will come and heal him. And the centurion making answer, said: Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter beneath my roof, but only say the word and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man subject to authority, having under me soldiers, and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. And Jesus hearing this, marvelled, and said to them that followed Him: Amen, I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel; and I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into the exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said to the centurion: Go, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And the servant was healed at the same hour."

Meditation.

ON COMMUNION.

1st Point. One good communion will make a saint, and to render it good it is necessary to have good will and perfect contrition. Those who require a perfect sanctity as a necessary condition to receive this divine sacrament, thinking that they thereby honor God, abase and dishonor Him. They would make it as useless to those who receive it as to those who do not receive it. What good will this holy Sacrament do me if I find in myself a perfect sanctity? And when I receive it, is it necessary that I should possess this sanctity? Is it being holy to think merely, that one has arrived at the height of holiness? Is it not rather a perfect and consummate blindness?

2d Point. Nothing is more unreasonable than to demand, as a necessary disposition to receive this sacrament, that purity without stain, and sanctity without defect, which is the fruit, the effect, and the end of this sacrament. But what presumption! to believe one's self worthy to receive a God! If we measure our unworthiness in the excellence of this holy sacrament, we will never communicate. If we measure it by our poverty, we will com-

municate every day. Jesus is not in this sacrament to make us fear Him, but to make us love Him. He has not taken the form of bread only to be looked at, but to be eaten. What are your dispositions? Do you approach the holy table often? Who, or what prevents your doing so?

3d Point. Prepare yourself carefully to communicate, but be convinced that the best preparation is the knowledge of your own poverty and misery, with a firm hope that our dear Lord will complete it, by giving you an affectionate desire to receive Him. It is necessary to partake of this celestial food with an eager and longing appetite. What kind of a preparation is it to receive Him with love, when your heart is filled with excessive fear? And who can help being seized with fear, believing it to be an abuse of this sacrament, if they do not receive it with angelic purity! Salvation sometimes depends on a communion: how do you know but that it is for this reason that the tempter of your soul persuades you to abstain from frequenting the table of the Lord?

Jesus, in this divine sacrament, is not only the nourishment of our souls, but He is also a remedy for all the evils which afflict them. He nourishes us as food, and heals us as medicine. If, then, you are sick, you should not go away, but approach Him like the leper, begging to be healed. One cannot receive the principal effect of this sacrament, which is sanctifying grace, without receiving all the other fruits which it produces. In order to receive increase of grace, it is necessary to be exempt from mortal sin, at least from all that we can call to mind. In order to receive all the fruits it is intended to produce in us, it is necessary not to be attached, voluntarily, to any venial sin. Have you not such an attachment, you who communicate to-day? Is it not that which prevents the effects which your communions should cause, and renders you so feeble and languishing? Have you not some habitual sin, which you do not wish to destroy? Are you willing to die after having received holy communion? Are you always resolved to labor for your perfection? These dispositions are safe for those who can communicate.

THIRD MONDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Meditation.

ON THE DISPOSITIONS NECESSARY TO RECEIVE WELL.

1st Point. To communicate often, and become more wicked, is a sign that we have not made a good use of this sacrament. But we must not think ourselves more wicked, because we feel a strong inclination to do evil. Communion does not destroy at once every bad inclination; it leaves us some, to hold us in dread of ourselves, and in dependence on grace. It does not take from us the sentiment, but it takes the consent, says St. Bernard. Would you desire to commit a mortal sin? Ah, how is it then that you profit so little by your communions? Could you abstain from committing it, if your soul were not nourished by the body and blood of Jesus Christ?

Do not confound the emotions of evil with consenting to evil. You may be wicked, although you have strong inclinations to be good; and you may be holy, although you have strong inclinations to do evil, provided you do not consent to those inclinations. Should temptations, then, influence you to remain away from this holy banquet? They should rather urge you to approach, in order to find there the strength to resist, and a remedy to cure those inclinations which beset you against your will; to warm yourself when you are cold, eat when you are hungry, and take medicine when you are sick. Are these the desires of a person who wishes to live, or of a despairing one, who wishes to die?

2d Point. Sensible devotion is not necessary to communicate well, since it does not depend on your own will, and God often refuses it to the greatest saints, for fear they will cease to endeavor to obtain it, or receive it on some presumption of their own merits. It is not in sensible devotion that true devotion consists, but in a prompt and constant wish to do all that God wishes us to do, and to avoid every thing which is displeasing to Him. Do that which you can do, with the grace of God, and "supply," says St. Bernard, "by your will, whatever is wanting in your charity;" thus you will be always well prepared.

Without grace you can do nothing that is good, and from whence will you draw it, if not from this sacrament, which is the true nourishment of the soul, the source and fountain of all good? The best of all preparations is that of the centurion,

who confesses that he is unworthy for our Lord to enter under his roof, but he desires the cure of his servant. Humility and desire render a soul well disposed to receive a divine guest. Humility reveals to us our unworthiness, and desire our poverty. One constrains us to say, with the centurion, "*Lord, I am not worthy;*" and with St. Peter, "*Retire from me, O Lord, for I am a sinner;*" but the other makes us say, with the same Apostle, when the rest of the company retreated from their beloved Master, "*Lord! to whom shall we go if not to Thee, who hast the words of eternal life?*"

In order to humiliate ourselves before our Lord, it is only necessary to examine these two points: Who art Thou, my God? Who am I? Thou art my Creator; I am thy servant. Thou hast existed from all eternity; I am only nothingness. Thou art light; I am darkness. Thou art strength; I am feebleness. Thou art the Holy of holies; I am the sinner of sinners.

To desire Jesus Christ, it is necessary to consider the honor and profit which we receive from eating at His table; the infinite love which invites us; the desire He has to enter into our hearts, and communicate to us his life; the extreme misery to which we are reduced, and the remedy we shall there receive with his grace, to resist temptation.

Happy are they who are invited to the wedding-feast of the Lamb. More happy still are they who sometimes eat there. Thrice happy are those who eat there often, and worthily. They have marks of their salvation, and almost certain pledges of their predestination. *Taste, and see how sweet the Lord is.*

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you. I was a stranger, and ye took me in. Depart from me you cursed, into everlasting fire, for I was a stranger, and you took me not in." *St. Matt.* xxv.

"And He said to them: With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you before I suffer." *St. Luke*, xxii.

"He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him." *St. John*, vi.

"A certain man made a great supper, and invited many, and they all began at once to make excuses." *St. Luke*, xiv.

"And I say to you, that none of those men that were invited shall taste of my supper." *St. Luke*, xiv.

"Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and

bring in hither the poor and the feeble, the blind and the lame." *St. Luke*, xiv.

"Zaccheus, make haste and come down, for to-day I must abide in thy house; and he made haste and came down, and received Him with joy, and when they all saw it they murmured, saying, that He was gone to be the guest of a man that is a sinner." *St. Luke*, xix.

"Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof. *St. Matt.* viii.

THIRD TUESDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Meditation.

ON CONFESSION.

1st Point. As often as you confess, you honor the wisdom of God, by an act which expresses an avowal of your own ignorance. You honor his power, by the exposure which you make of your weakness. You make suitable amends to his greatness, and majesty, which you have offended. You give to his justice the satisfaction which he demands. You abase your pride. You turn away the chastisements that you merited, and which God had prepared for you. You sacrifice to Him yourself, which, above all things in the world, you love the best. You purify your soul. You apply a sovereign remedy to your wounds. You acquire a particular right to the grace of God. You strike at the root of your vices. You secure your salvation. You find peace and repose for your conscience.

2d Point. Ah, my soul! do you now comprehend that confession is the key that unlocks the treasury of the grace of God! Do you now understand how excellent a thing it is to confess often? Why, then, do you confess so seldom? Why is it that you approach the throne of the mercy of God with so much fear, so much confusion and inquietude? Do you not know that you have offended Him? Do you not wish to repair the injury you have done? You cannot make more worthy satisfaction than to humiliate yourself before Him, and confess your sins with sincere contrition. Have you not merited hell? What a consolation to be able to turn away the anger of God, and avoid the everlasting pains of hell, at so small a price! How can you, who are not at peace with God, expect peace or consolation in your conscience?

It is only by a reconciliation with Him, that you can obtain these heavenly graces.

3d Point. Oh my good, my merciful God, I thank Thee for having afforded me this safe plank after shipwreck; for having presented me with so easy a remedy for my wounds. What should I be without this resource? Where should I have been at the present time? What would have become of me in the future, if I had not this means of returning to Thee, and of being restored to thy favor? Oh, happy souls, who wash themselves often in the sacred laver of thy blood! Unhappy souls! who prefer eternal death to a remedy so easy and efficacious! More miserable still are those who abuse and make subservient to their crimes the sacrament which ought to destroy them.

As for me, I will sing constantly with thy prophet this beautiful canticle of love and gratitude: Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and let all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and never forget all that He has done for Thee. Who forgiveth all thy iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with mercy and compassion; who satisfieth thy desire with good things, thy youth shall be renewed like the eagle's.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"The Lord who made us." *Psalm* xciv.

"Lay open thy works to the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be directed." *Proverbs*, xvi.

"Be not ashamed to confess thy sins." *Eccles.* iv.

"My Son, give glory to the Lord God of Israel, and confess, and tell me what thou hast done, and hide it not." *Josue*, vii.

"Give thanks while thou art living, whilst thou art alive and in health, thou shalt please God and shall glory in his mercies." *Eccles.* xvii.

"And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, it shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed also in heaven." *St. Matt.* xvi.

"Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins ye shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins ye shall retain, they are retained." *St. John*, xx.

THIRD WEDNESDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Meditation.

ON THE DEFECTS OF CONFESSION.

1st Point. There are some who are not sufficiently scrupulous in the examination of their conscience, and others who fall into the opposite extreme by being too much so. The first are those who do not enter properly into themselves, or devote that time and care which is necessary to the discovery of their offences. The second are those who occupy themselves exclusively in thinking of their sins without making the least effort to conceive a true sorrow for them. This is a cunning and malicious stratagem of the devil, who does not object to confession when contrition is not united to penance; and who, to deprive you of obtaining the grace of true compunction of conscience, occupies your mind incessantly with what you are to say. He does not permit you to reflect on the goodness of God or your own ingratitude; on your perfidious conduct, or the cause of your disorders; of the means of abandoning them, or the amendment of your life. Are you not one of those anxious and scrupulous souls who believe themselves lost if they forget a single sin, and are only satisfied with their confession when they have made an exact declaration of their faults without having conceived either grief or contrition for them?

If it were absolutely necessary that you should confess those things which you cannot remember, God would make them known to you. If He does not enlighten you, after having spent a reasonable time in the examination of your conscience, He will pardon freely whatever sins you forget. It is more acceptable to Him for you to afflict your heart than your mind; to detest the sins that you remember, and to make greater efforts of your will than of your memory. He wishes you to humiliate yourself before Him; to make a sacrifice of your own will, and abandon yourself to his mercy; and consider and apply to yourself, that which it is necessary for you to *do*, rather than that which you have to say. Correct this defect in yourself, and ask pardon of Almighty God.

2d Point. It is not necessary for contrition to be sensible in order to be true. It is necessary to conceive a great sorrow for your sins, but it is not necessary to judge of the truth or the sincerity of the sentiment by the emotions you may feel. It is only those, who, in sincerity of soul, wish not to deceive God; who

shrink with horror from committing sacrilege; who detest their sins, and determine by the aid of his grace to abandon them, that have true sorrow and compunction. It is a common artifice of the devil to persuade penitents that they are without true repentance if they do not feel a sensible sorrow, in order to trouble them, disquiet them, give them a horror for the sacrament of penance, and thus hold them always slaves to their sins. Are you one of those miserable penitents who never believe they have true contrition unless they feel it? Correct this dangerous fault. Go in good faith to God; be not too particular in your devotions; He loves simplicity of heart. If you do not feel that degree of contrition which you think the number and quality of your offences demand, give yourself no uneasiness or distraction, but supply the defect by a profound humility and tender confidence in the mercy of God.

3D POINT. To fall a second time into the same sin is not a certain mark that your repentance was defective; the sacraments do not render you impeccable. Their effect is to prevent our falling often and grievously. The truth of the preceding deed is not destroyed by the fact of the deed which follows. I can relapse into sickness after having recovered. Had not St. Peter made a good confession? What sin did he commit the same night? Nevertheless, when one falls continually into mortal sin, and does not amend his life after confessing, when he is not more vigilant and faithful, it is much to be feared that such penitents do not really desire to forsake their sins. Nature is weak, but the heart is wicked; and it is necessary to set at defiance, and do violence to its love and its hatred, its inclinations and instincts.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Behold, thou art made whole, sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee." *St. John*, v.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all iniquity." 1 *St. John*, i.

"Be converted to me with all your heart, rend your hearts and not your garments, and turn to the Lord, your God, for He is gracious and merciful, patient, and rich in mercy." *Joel*, ii.

"I thought upon the days of old, and I had in my mind the eternal years, and I meditated in the night with my own heart. and I was exercised, and I swept my spirit." *Psalm* lxxvi.

"I have acknowledged my sin to Thee, and my injustice I have not concealed, and I said: I will confess against myself my injustice to the Lord, and Thou hast forgiven the wickedness of my sin." *Psalm* xxxi.

THIRD THURSDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Meditation.

ON SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE.

1st Point. *Show yourself to a priest*, who is the physician of your soul; who holds towards you the place of God; who is the organ of his word; the interpreter of his will; who is given to you to guide you to heaven, to counsel you in your doubts, to console you in your afflictions, strengthen you in your combats, to expose to you the snares of the devil, and to apply a divine remedy to all the diseases of your soul. Discover to him the wounds inflicted by sin, and the infirmities of your nature, for God desires it and will not heal you unless you obey him.

Have you a director? Why have you not? Is it because you do not wish to be healed? Is it that you believe you are not in need of one? You are then already, or will soon be, under a delusion. Where is there a man who, knowing what he is, will venture to say he is sufficient for himself and requires no better guide? Does God govern us by particular revelation? This is an heretical sentiment. Are you more enlightened than St. Paul, to whom God sent a poor priest to instruct and guide him? are you more enlightened than the most illustrious saints who submitted themselves entirely to their director as children to their parents, scholars to their masters, travellers to their guides, sheep to their shepherds?

2d Point. The sheep is a docile animal which cannot live without a shepherd. The wolf is a savage and solitary animal who hates a shepherd. Are you a sheep or a wolf? Are you one of the predestined or a reprobate? You declare yourself to be a person whose life is spiritual. If so, you should possess more humility and be more distrustful of yourself than of others; you ought to place more dependance on God, and submit with more docility to his guidance. Since, then, He guides men by men, what right have you to suppose that He will direct you if you have no one to instruct or admonish you?

It is necessary to know ourselves that we may distrust ourselves. Is there any one on earth more diseased than you are? is there any one more feeble? is there any one more blind? Ah, why is it then that you do not resort to a physician to be healed? or to a captain who will defend you? or to a master who will instruct you? or to a guide who will lead you? Is it not tempting

God to wish to evade his divine law? Who will assure you that you are in the right way if not those through whom our dear Lord addresses you, and to whom He says, "he who hears you hears me, he who despises you despises me." To govern the soul it is necessary to have supernatural light, celestial science, extraordinary graces, and discretion of mind to discriminate between the movements of grace and nature, of God and of the devil. Do you not know that these gratuitous graces are not imparted to us for ourselves alone, but for others also? He who is much enlightened in the science of guiding the souls of others is often very blind in leading himself, for God allows his graces to flow only through the channels of obedience and legitimate authority. He who establishes himself as his own master and guide has but little care for the artifices of the devil, who persuades him that it will be impossible for him to fall into a delusion if he depends on his own judgments. The ways of God being above our reason, it is necessary to have particular graces to distinguish and understand them; for God refuses his grace to the haughty, and imparts it only to the humble and obedient.

Oh, my God! I confess my blindness. I have mistaken night for day, darkness for light, evil for good, and lying visions for the truth. I see spread out before me paths without number, but I do not know which one of them is designed for me by Providence to lead me to heaven. Thou sayest to me, through the wisest of men, that *there are paths which resemble the way of eternal life, but which conduct those who follow them to death!* How do I know but that I am pursuing one of these deceptive paths? Who will assure me, if not he whom Thou hast appointed to guide me and whom Thou hast commanded me to obey? I renounce then my own will, my own guidance, and determine henceforth to obey implicitly the instructions of my spiritual director.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Be not wise in thy own conceit; fear God, and depart from evil." *Proverbs*, iii.

"The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he that is wise hearkeneth to counsels." *Proverbs*, xii.

"He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." *Proverbs*, xxviii.

"My son, do thou nothing without counsel, and thou shalt not repent when thou hast done." *Eccles.* xxxii.

THIRD FRIDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Meditation.

ON THE CHOICE OF A CONFESSOR.

1st Point. It is prudent to be careful in the choice of a confessor, and not to trust your spiritual guidance to any one indiscriminately; but when you have chosen him it is necessary to trust him entirely, unless his conduct or way of life afford reason to believe that he is either incapable of guiding the souls of those under his care, or does not feel disposed to take the necessary pains to do it. By a good confessor we understand one who is learned, experienced, wise, prudent and charitable. Generally speaking, it is proper to distrust a confessor who desires to render those under his charge implicitly obedient to his direction, and deprive them of the privilege of addressing themselves to others, in relation to their spiritual affairs, and who seeks to govern the temporal as well as the spiritual concerns of his penitents, and make them vow obedience to him. If your confessor is of this description, you will act discreetly to abandon him, for there is reason to fear that his conduct is more human than divine.

2d Point. Persons who are over particular in the matter of a confessor, and difficult to suit, should be careful to select one who will teach them the elements of a spiritual life, and lead them by the royal road of humility and mortification. Others are not less to blame, who heedlessly place their souls under the spiritual direction of guides who are suspected in their doctrine or lives. Alas! is the body which perishes of more value than the soul that never dies? When we are diseased we seek the aid of the most learned and skillful physicians for relief, but how is it with the soul whose diseases are more fatal? Fearing the odium of inconstancy, do we not abandon them to the spiritual care of men who neither understand their complaints or how to apply the proper remedy for their relief? It is only when the soul is in an extremity, and no time to be lost, that any one holding the functions of the priesthood may be called in to minister to it, lest it perish ternally.

3d Point. It is extremely dangerous to separate God from the person of your confessor, because it naturally follows that you will either despise or doubt him, or become attached to him by badly regulated sentiments. But if you regard only God in your intercourse with him, you will speak to him with respect, listen

to him with humility, obey him with submission, open your heart to him with confidence, and refrain from murmuring against him, or speaking of him with too much familiarity. If it is not thus between your confessor and yourself, you have reason to distrust yourself. And much more so, if you feel a desire to see and converse with him when it is not necessary; if you are uneasy and sad when absent from him; if you dispute and argue with him; refuse to obey him in spiritual matters, and murmur and complain that he does not think as much of you as he does of others. Examine yourself on these points and correct them. Change your director if he is not profitable to your spiritual advancement, particularly if he is suspected in his doctrines. But if he is learned and virtuous; if his doctrines are pure, and his life without reproach, do not change your confessor, but *change your life*, and correct the irregularity of your ways.

Oh Lord, with thy Apostle I ask Thee, *What Thou wouldst have me do?* I am deeply conscious that I am incapable of governing myself, and I have learned from thy servant that a man is not master of his own ways. That it is Thou who hast marked out the road for our feet, and we ought to travel therein if we truly desire to find Thee. Oh, my Lord and Master, be Thou my director! Can I have one who is better, more capable or sure than thyself? But I see my presumption in praying thus. Thou wilt send me back, as Thou didst thy Apostle, to Ananias. I will obey Thee, dear Lord, and him also whom Thou hast appointed to hold thy place. I will abandon my soul to his guidance and endeavor to learn from him the holy science of perfection.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"He that heareth you heareth me; he that despiseth you despiseth me." *St. Luke*, x.

"The Scribes and Pharisees have sitten on the chair of Moses. All, therefore, they shall say to you, observe and do: but according to their works, do ye not; for they say, and do not." *St. Matt.* xxiii.

"For the lips of the priest shall keep knowledge; and they shall seek the law at his mouth: because he is the Angel* of the Lord of hosts." *Malachias*, ii.

"There is a way which seemeth just to a man; but the ends thereof lead to death." *Proverbs*, xiv.

* *The Angel*, viz., the Minister and Messenger.

"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" *Acts*, ix.

"Arise, and go into the city; and there it shall be told thee what thou must do." *Ibid.*

THIRD SATURDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Meditation.

ON OBEDIENCE TO SUPERIORS.

1st Point. *Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him unto justice*, says St. Paul. The first duty of justice is to submit our minds to God and to those who, appointed by himself, hold his place on earth. For as a man has received every faculty he possesses from God, he ought to offer Him principally the homage of his mind and will, which are above all the rest. The mind submits to God in believing those things which it does not comprehend; the will renders him obedience by doing those things with a submissive spirit which are repugnant to it. If I submit only to that which my reason can grasp, my obedience is not elevated above nature; it is not divine, it is human; and I refuse to God the principal homage that He requires from me. Jesus, who is the wisdom of the father, was a model of obedience. Listen to the sweet accents of humility which declare: "*As I hear so I judge*," —"*I seek not my own will*," and yet, you who are his creature judge only by the senses, and do only those things which are agreeable to your will. Is this obedience? Do you not fear the chastisement of Saul, who was punished for having preferred his own judgments to those of Samuel? Does not the fate of Ananias and Saphira, who were struck suddenly dead for having reserved to themselves a part of their offering, terrify you? All men must submit themselves entirely to God, particularly those who choose a religious state and make a vow of obedience. If you do not submit without question to the judgment of those who are appointed to govern you, then you are not, properly speaking, either a Christian or a religious. For we are Christians by faith, and religious by obedience; and either of these two require a submission of mind to those who are teaching us, and a willingness to be governed by those who conduct us.

2d Point. Original sin impaired our understanding as well as our will. Without grace I can neither know or do any good thing; and this grace is only given to humble and obedient souls. Oh, what perverse blindness to prefer the exercise or suggestions

of our own undisciplined mind to that of our superiors! What assurance can a person have that he is in the way of salvation who is guided by no other light than his own? What is there more difficult to find and to follow than the right road to heaven? How many men who followed only the suggestions of their own reason have fallen into delusions? As long as the sheep allow themselves to be guided by their shepherd they are safe, but when they wander far from the fold and his protection, they are devoured by the wolf, who watches day and night for them.

Are you docile? do you follow without resistance the guidance of your shepherd? do you not esteem yourself more wise, learned, and enlightened than he is? do you not reason and argue concerning those things which he has ordered you to perform? do you not murmur against his commands and the rules which he has prescribed for you? "*Lord*," said Samuel, "*thy people no longer wish me to govern them.*" "*It is not thee*," said God to him, "*whom they despise, it is me; they are weary of my laws and wish me no longer to rule over them.*"

Haughty spirit! you will not submit to the government of your God; you must then be under that of the devil. You will discover how infinite is the difference between these two masters.

Oh, my God, I have wandered like a lost sheep; I have followed, even to the present time, only the dictates of my own reason. I have obeyed only the suggestions of my passions. Reclaim thy poor servant, oh my God, who has wandered from the path of duty, and undertake once more the guidance of my soul! Oh, it has fallen into strange disorders since it separated itself from Thee. My soul, will you not be subject to your God? And if you subject yourself to Him will you not subject your reason and will also to his law?

3D POINT. The ways of God are admirable, but they are hidden; they lead to heaven, but by paths unknown to us, and which often appear contrary to our good. As our end is supernatural it is necessary that the ways that lead us thither should be so likewise. The ways by which God designs to lead us are so hidden that we can only feel assured of our salvation when we abandon ourselves blindly to the spiritual direction of those who conduct us. For it is to them, and not to us, that God discovers the paths wherein it is his holy will that we shall walk. If I submit my reason to the will of my superiors, I am therefore certain that I am doing the will of God. Can He deceive me? Will He deceive me? Why, then, need we distrust his Providence?

Oh, how happy is the man who abandons himself blindly to the

law of holy obedience. He has embarked in a vessel wherein he can rest and sleep, because Jesus Christ is his pilot. But he who is governed by the judgment of his own will is constantly dashing against rocks and suffering shipwreck.

Obey, then, Christian soul, your director; obey him in all that is not contrary to the law of God; obey him promptly on every occasion; obey him constantly, even unto death; obey him blindly, without discussion or argument, in all which is not sinful, like a little child who obeys his mother. The decree has been pronounced: if you do not become as a little child you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Obedience is better than sacrifice." 1 *Kings*, xv.

"As I hear, so I judge, and my judgments are just." *St. John*, v.

"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? and the Lord said to him: Arise, and go into the city, and there it shall be told thee what thou must do." *Acts*, ix.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

THE GOSPEL. *St. Matt.* viii. 23–27.

"AT that time, when Jesus entered into a boat, his disciples followed Him, and behold a great tempest arose in the sea, so that the ship was covered with waves, but He was asleep. And his disciples came to Him and awakened Him, saying: Lord, save us, we perish. And Jesus saith unto them: Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then rising up, He commanded the winds and the sea, and there came a great calm. But the men wondered, saying: What manner of man is this, for the winds and the sea obey Him?"

Meditation.

1ST POINT. Jesus entered into a vessel, followed by his disciples. He led them out on the sea, that He might prove their faith, and give them a manifestation of his power. Avoid all dangerous occasions, but should you be led into them by circumstances beyond your control, be careful to have Jesus with you, otherwise you will perish therein. Beseech Him to direct you in all your designs, and to bless all that you undertake. He will

do it if you are not governed by the impulses of your own passions, and are sincerely determined to follow his counsels.

2D POINT. When Jesus is with us, He causes great tempests to rise from the deep, for the purpose of teaching us to watch always, instead of seeking rest here below; and ever to have recourse to Him in tribulation, that we may recognize his care and providence. The dangers of the world resemble those of the sea. They assail us, either in tempests, which arouse our passions; or stand in our way like rocks, which are evil associates; or pursue and rob us like enemies and pirates, which are the world, the flesh, and the devil; or beset us like calms, which are long seasons of great prosperity; or place us in peril through the negligence of our pilot, or that of the sailors, who sleep instead of watching; or abandon us to the power of great fish, like whales, which are the dragons of the sea, which means devils, or the companionship of sinful and wicked men. According to some of the Fathers, Judas was the cause of this tempest. Examine yourself as to the source and cause of the tempests which toss and buffet you, and fly for succor to Him who is alone able to still them.

Alas, my Lord! I have examined myself, and perceive that all my misfortunes arise from my own ill-regulated passions, and the bad companions with whom I constantly associate. Oh my passions excite fearful tempests in my heart! Oh, I now see how pernicious is the example and companionship of the wicked to my soul! When, my dear Jesus, wilt Thou deliver me from this stormy sea, where I am tossed by continual tempests? When wilt Thou rebuke and command my passions, that they may be still?

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Behold, he shall neither slumber nor sleep, that keepeth Israel." *Psalm* cxx.

"Thou calledst upon me in affliction, and I delivered thee; I heard thee in the secret place of tempest: I proved thee at the waters of contradiction." *Psalm* lxxx.

"Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." *Psalm* xlix.

"I sleep, but my heart watcheth." *Cant.* v.

FOURTH MONDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. What must we do when the tempest rises, and threatens us with destruction? You must approach Jesus as the disciples did, to awaken Him by your cries and prayers; and finally have recourse to Him, who seems to sleep unconscious of your peril. It is necessary to represent to Him your necessities, and exclaim, "Save, Lord, or we perish." If after that the tempest continues, fall at his feet and rest with Him, relying on his providence without fear of the storm, being persuaded that Jesus will soon arise, and command the winds and the waves to be still.

2d Point. Why are ye afraid, O ye of little faith? Have you yet to learn that nothing happens on earth without the permission of God? Is He not the ruler of the earth and sea? Can He not appease every tempest? Wait, then, for a little while in patient faith, and He will appear and command the stormy waves to be still, so that a great calm will ensue. Summer succeeds winter, consolations follow trouble, peace appears after tribulation, day comes after night, and after the tempest a calm.

3d Point. Oh sweet Jesus! Thou beholdest the danger to which I am exposed, and the waves of temptation which threaten to engulf me! How much longer wilt Thou sleep while I perish? Rise up, O Lord, why sleepest Thou? rise up, and do not reject us, or suffer us to perish.

The Lord is with me: I fear neither stormy winds or tempests, nor men nor devils. My soul! what is it that you fear? Jesus is with you. He permits temptations to assail and to toss you, to try your faith, your hope, your love. Repose on his providence, and say with David: "*I have slept, I have taken my rest, and I have risen up, because the Lord hath protected me. When I called upon Him, the God of my justice heard me: when I was in distress Thou hast enlarged me.*" Psalm iv.

FOURTH TUESDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Meditation.

ON THE USE AND NECESSITY OF TEMPTATION.

1st Point. Evil purifies the good, tempests give strength and resistance to the roots of trees; the continual agitation of the

sea prevents the corruption of its waters; the wind blows the chaff, and separates it from the wheat; fire refines gold; snow heats the earth; combat is the test of virtue; infirmity preserves humility; temptation augments charity. Oh my God, it is good for me to be humiliated. Try me, my God, and prove me! But no! this is presumption. Suffer me not, Thou my Father, to be tempted beyond my strength, for I know too well my own weakness and poverty. There are none so helpless as I, none who are not more able to defend themselves. If it is necessary that I should be tempted, give me strength to overcome the temptation, and do not permit the enemy of my soul to gain an advantage over me.

2d Point. Every thing is opposed by a something adverse to it. We cannot exist without opposition. It is the war of the elements which purifies the air, and gives peace and fruitfulness to the earth. If you are without temptation how can you be saved? If you fly ingloriously from the combat you shall not be saved. If you are not assaulted how can you overcome? It is better to be proved here than be reproved hereafter. Gold and straw were cast together into the fire; the gold was purified, and the straw consumed.

What are your temptations? How do you pass the ordeal? Is your faith of gold, or of straw? Are you victorious in the conflict? Do you surrender your arms to the enemy? What a shame to allow yourself to be vanquished in the service of God! What baseness and cowardice to yield, when God and the holy angels are the witnesses and spectators of the combat! What perfidy to betray your prince! What a misfortune to lose a crown through want of courage. What excuse can you offer for not having resisted temptation?

3d Point. Nature is weak, but grace is strong. You combat with spirits, but you have spirits to defend you. Evil spirits are powerful, but good angels are more so. You are only a man, but you are clothed with the strength of God, who fights for you. Why, then, are you so often vanquished? Alas, it is because you are unfaithful and treacherous; it is because you do not invoke the aid of God, and have recourse to Him; it is because you do not avoid the dangerous and proximate occasions of sin; it is because you do not guard your heart, and withhold your consent to the admission of the devil; it is because you are not faithful in little things; what wonder, then, that you fall into great ones!

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"What doth he know, that hath not been tried?" *Eccles.* xxxiv.

"Gold and silver are tried in the fire, but acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation." *Eccles.* ii.

"Afflicted in few things, in many they shall be well rewarded; because God hath tried them, and found them worthy of himself. As gold in the furnace He hath proved them, and as a victim of a holocaust, He hath received them." *Wisdom*, iii.

FOURTH WEDNESDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. I am tempted. Hold fast your integrity, temptation only endures for a season. If you yield to it you will regret it eternally; if you resist it, your consolation will be inexpressible. In giving up to it you become a slave; in resisting, you become a king. There is much pain and weariness in contending with, but great joy in vanquishing, a deadly foe. The conflict is difficult, but it is necessary; it exercises your virtue; it develops the strength of your fidelity; it imparts a glorious lustre to your courage; it causes your love to triumph; it gains crowns for you; it enriches you with infinite treasures of grace, and makes you worthy of eternal life.

2d Point. What do you fear? God is for and with you, hence you are stronger than your enemy, who cannot overcome you without your own consent; he is a ferocious but enchained dog, who cannot inflict a wound on you, unless you approach him. You are not rendered culpable by having an inclination to sin, and if you combat with the temptation, and overcome it, your recompense will be made more glorious by the conflict: it is resistance that crowns patience.

3d Point. When you are tempted, ascend in spirit to heaven, and behold all the ineffable bliss you are in danger of losing; descend into hell, and see all the frightful miseries which you are on the point of gaining! Remember, that the pleasures of this life pass, and leave a mortal sting in the heart: pain also passes, but it leaves peace, and extreme satisfaction in the soul; that a person who is wise will avoid those things which will give him great

cause for repentance; that if you place yourself in the way of, and consent to temptation, you must either repent, or be eternally lost. On the termination of this conflict depends, perhaps, your salvation; on this moment depends, perhaps, your eternity; on the result of this crisis depends, perhaps, your life and your health; and on temptation depends, perhaps, your predestination.

Oh, Jesus! my King and my Lord! I have most shamefully betrayed Thee; I have often abandoned thy side, to range myself with thy enemies, to fight against Thee! My heart is penetrated with sorrow; I am in extreme confusion when I review my baseness, my ingratitude, my treachery, and my perfidious conduct. What shall I do to repair my fault? Thou sayest that I must make war with my enemies, and gain as many victories as I have hitherto lost. I wish it, I desire it; but, alas, I am feeble! I am base! I am inconstant. Aid me, O Lord, and keep me near Thee, and if all the spirits of hell gather round about me, I will not fear them. Send the succor of thy armies, oh God, speedily to my assistance; defend me against thy enemies; scatter those who hate Thee; sustain me, strengthen me, and let not the devil boast that he vanquished me, even when Thou didst sustain me.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"God tempted Abraham." *Genesis*, xxii.

"Fear not; for God is come to prove you." *Exodus*, xx.

"God hath tried them, and found them worthy of Him." *Wisdom*, iii.

"The trying of your faith worketh patience." *St. James*, i.

"Every man is tempted, being drawn away by his own concupiscence." *Ibid.*

"Count it all joy when you shall fall into divers temptations." *Ibid.*

FOURTH THURSDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Meditation.

ON THE DOMINION OF GOD OVER US.

1st. Point. You have not always existed. There was a time when you were not. It is God who has drawn you from nothing; it is He who has given you your being. You are therefore his creature, and his dominion is absolute over you. He can

command you to perform his will; He can forbid you to do whatsoever He pleases; He can defend or forsake you according to his own good pleasure; He can govern and direct you as He wills; He can place you in whatever position He pleases; He can preserve or destroy you; He can elevate or cast you down; He can console or afflict you; He can cause you to live or die. As He has created you, body and soul, He alone holds supreme dominion over you; and it ought to be sufficient for us to know that He commands a thing, for us to believe it is just, holy, and reasonable.

2d Point. Do you believe these truths, Christian soul? Are you persuaded that God is your King and your Sovereign? that He has absolute power over you? that He can make you subservient to his will? Ah, why is it, then, that you do not honor and obey Him? Why is it that you despise his commandments, and are continually opposed to his holy will? Why do you complain and murmur at the ways of his providence? All that He does is not sufficient to satisfy you; you are even so insolent as to accuse Him of injustice and harshness towards you, if not with your lips, at least in your heart.

3d Point. Are you contented in the place, condition and state, in which his providence has established you? Is there nothing wherein you have rebelled against his commands? Have you not murmured against him when some grievous event has befallen you? Can you say with David, "*My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready for all things.*" Is it ready to receive honor? is it ready to receive ignominy? is it ready to live in abundance? is it ready to live in poverty? is it ready to enjoy health? is it ready to suffer all the pains and inconvenience of ill-health and sickness? is it ready to live? is it ready to die? Are these your feelings, these your dispositions? Alas! you have lived up to the present time like one who believes there is no God, and will not recognize his sovereignty. Are you not more guilty than the atheist, in believing in God and not adoring Him, in recognizing his sovereignty and refusing to obey Him?

FOURTH FRIDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. God is your first cause and the master of your life; He is its preserver; He is its reparator. You depend on Him necessarily; you depend on Him essentially; you depend on Him absolutely; you depend on Him continually; you depend on Him eternally. Oh sweet truths to a soul which loves God! Oh terrible truths to a soul which does not fear Him! It is in vain, oh rebellious and insolent heart, that you have said with Pharaoh, that you recognize no master, not even the Lord above you. There is one on whom you depend eternally and essentially, and nothing can withdraw you from his dominion.

2d Point. Is it not just, my soul, that you should submit to, and obey Him who has given you being, who preserves you at all times, and who can take you out of the world at any moment He pleases? Oh what injustice to drive God from a heart which He has formed with his own hands; from a heart which He has purchased with his blood; from a heart wherein He wishes to repose; which He wishes to prepare and sanctify, in order to make it the palace of his glory, the throne of his greatness, and the temple of his spirit! What presumption in a worm of the dust to murmur against Him who created him. What! God commands the wind and the sea to be still, and He is instantly obeyed; He delivers his commands to man, who is the most dear of all his creatures to Him, and that worm of the dust receives them with contempt, outrages, and disobedience. If He is your father, where is the love you bear Him? If He is your sovereign, where is the obedience that you owe Him?

3d Point. Oh, God my Father! Thou hast in me a most wicked child! Oh God my King! Thou hast in me a most rebellious subject. I am filled with grief and confusion when I reflect on the manner in which I have treated Thee! How hast Thou been able to bear so long and patiently with my pride and insolence? Of what benefit was it to a majesty like thine to have preserved so long the life of a rebellious slave, and loaded him with gifts and blessings, instead of chastising him as he deserved? Oh my creator, my father, my king, I thank Thee for all thy mercies! I will henceforth devote myself to thy service. I am resolved to repent of my faults and atone for them. I will keep inviolate thy

commandments. I will never murmur, but rather bless Thee as did holy Job, and say with thy servant, *Though He slay me I will trust in Him.*

FOURTH SATURDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. God is not only my first principle, but He is also my last end. He has created me for his glory, and to render me eternally happy by a participation in his bliss. Every creature, unless he is infirm, restless, wicked, and vicious, tends to this end, and desires the consummation of the designs of God; it is the term of all his movements and inclinations; it is the height of his happiness and perfection. Ah, why do we not have recourse to God, who is our end? Why do we forsake God, who is the centre of our repose and peace, to occupy ourselves in the vain and miserable pursuit of worldly advantages and honors?

2d Point. Oh, my God, my first beginning, my last end; Thou art the principle of my life, and the centre of my desires. Thy hands have formed me, and still preserve, sustain, and defend me. Oh, astonishing thing! I am always in thy arms, and think not of Thee; I am always in thy heart, and conceive no love for Thee; Thy creatures serve me, and I am averse to serving Thee! They sacrifice their will to mine, and I refuse to sacrifice myself to thine!

3d Point. Thou hast created me for thyself, and I think of nothing but of living for myself; Thou hast died for me, and I do not wish to live for Thee; Thou hast promised me eternal treasures, and I sigh not after them; Thou dost threaten me with eternal loss, and I am not afraid. Hitherto, I have always been absorbed in myself; I have referred all things to myself; I have centred all things in myself; I have sought all things for myself; I have been satisfied in myself.

Oh my God, henceforth, I will be all to Thee; I will serve no other master than Thee; I will seek my repose only in Thee; I will labor only for Thee. Is not the honor of serving Thee enough, without the hope of heaven or the fear of hell? I desire no greater recompense, no higher joy, than to love and serve Thee. Heaven is too small for those who love Thee; hell is too little for those who despise Thee. These thoughts touch me, and are most agreeable to me. I am altogether God's. I am from God, I am in

God, I am for God. From God, as from my principle; in God, as in my centre; for God, as for my last end.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Because the Lord your God, He is the God of gods, and the Lord of lords; a great God and mighty, and terrible, who accepteth no person, nor taketh bribes." *Deuteronomy*, x.

"The Son honoreth the father, and the servant his master. If, then, I be a father, where is my honor; and if I be a master, where is my fear, saith the Lord of hosts?" *Malachias*, i.

"Shall not my soul be subject to the Lord, for from Him is my salvation." *Psalm* lxi.

"Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof?" 1 *Corinthians*, ix.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

"At that time, Jesus spoke this parable to the multitude, saying: the Kingdom of heaven is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field. But while men were asleep, his enemy came and oversowed cockle among the wheat, and went his way. And when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared also the cockle. Then the servants of the good man of the house came and said to him: Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? from whence, then, hath it cockle? And he said, to them: An enemy hath done this. And the servants said to him: Wilt thou that we go and gather it up? And he said: No, lest while you gather up the cockle you root up the wheat also together with it. Let both grow until the harvest, and in time of the harvest I will say to the reapers: Gather up first the cockle, and bind it in bundles to burn, but gather the wheat into my barn."

Meditation.

ON THE GOSPEL.

1st Point. God has sown good grain in the field of his Church, and many graces in your heart. Behold them in the divine truths which you receive; in the inspirations which enlighten you; in the interior touches you feel; in the good actions you witness; in the holy examples you have; in the pious discourses you hear; in the communions you make. Oh, what more excellent grain than the body of Jesus Christ! How often has He entered into

your heart? What fruit has He produced there? Where are your virtues? Where are your good works? Is it an insignificant sin to prevent this divine seed from bringing forth and producing fruit?

Whence come these dissensions, which choke and destroy the good grain that God has planted in your soul? Whence come these errors and evil thoughts which infect your spirit? whence these badly regulated emotions which corrupt your heart? Is it that you repose in sloth, and do not watch over yourself? Is it not because you allow your senses too much freedom, and do not guard well the gates of your eyes and ears? Is it not that you frequent bad company; that you read dangerous books; that you take no heed of little sins; that you have abandoned the holy exercise of prayer and mortification?

2d Point. The enemy has sown the tares. Good precedes evil, truth error. The tares are not sown until after the good grain is planted. Virtue and truth come from God, evil and error from the devil. The hearts of our first parents were as a beautiful field in which God had sown all kinds of holy truths and celestial virtues. The enemy of God was unlooked for and unexpected by them, but he came and sowed the tares of error and sin among the perfect grain. From that time God scatters good seed in our souls, which is corrupted and destroyed by the tempt ations which the devil sows in our hearts and our souls. And, notwithstanding this, we guard not our hearts, but sleep, while he enters and busies himself with effecting our ruin.

Good men are like good grain in the field of the Church, and the wicked resemble the tares. The wicked have been mixed with the good, from the beginning of the world, and God will not separate them. Why? Because he wishes to exercise the patience of good men, and prevent their being corrupted by too easy and voluptuous a life; to refine their virtue, to augment their merit, and compel them to have recourse to Him through prayer, and place all their confidence in Him. It is his design for them to afford an example to the wicked, in this life, and become their witnesses and judges in the life to come. It is to arrest the anger of God, which would destroy cities and provinces, if therein were not found some who served him in spirit and in truth. It is in order to make a bright manifestation of his mercy that He preserves the good amidst the wicked, without their re ceiving loss or injury; and who often tolerates an infinite number of sinners on earth, in consideration of a small number of the righteous who live among them. Are you good grain, sown by

God, which will at last be gathered into heaven? or are you one of those evil seed, scattered by the devil, which will be bound and cast into hell?

3d Point. Notwithstanding the world is composed of bad as well as good men, and that the bad serve as a means for the sanctification of the good, it is equally true, that the good cease to deserve the name of servants of God, when they take pleasure in the company of the wicked. It is impossible to live without them; but it is possible not to imitate their vices, or live as they do. They are only satisfied in our company when our lives and sentiments correspond with their own. If you unite yourself with them in time, you will find yourself at the end of time still united with them as clods of earth to the tares, and will be cast with them into hell, to burn there forever.

O God, my Father, how shall I exhibit my gratitude to Thee, for all those graces Thou hast bestowed on me since I came into the world? How much good grain hast Thou not sown in my heart, and, alas, no fruit has yet appeared! It is covered and choked with thorns; wicked thoughts possess it; disorderly emotions agitate it. Ah! when shall it be that Thou wilt uproot the tares? Is this not yet expedient? is there danger of uprooting the good with the evil? This grievous mingling is bitter; but it keeps you in fear and humility. The desire of too zealously correcting innocent defects, very often prevents the growth of truth; at least it is apt to destroy the good grain, which is the grace of God, and prevent its producing fruits unto eternal life. Oh, Christian soul! that you who have so many defects should be proud and arrogant, instead of being patient and humble! Endeavor to correct them, and believe, that God and his angels will separate the tares from the wheat, when your faith and good works are perfected according to his good pleasure.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"The seed is the word of God." *Luke*, viii.

"You have sowed much and brought in little. He that hath earned wages put them into a sack with holes in it." *Aggeus*, i.

"What! could you not watch one hour with me? Watch ye, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh is weak." *St. Matt.* xxvi.

FIFTH MONDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Meditation.

ON THE NECESSITY OF FORSAKING EVIL COMPANY.

1st Point. Good grain cannot be separated from the tares, but you can, and you ought, to abandon the society of bad companions. You will, ere long, resemble those with whom you frequently associate; if they are vicious, you have much reason to fear that you, too, are depraved, or will soon become so. One frequents the company of those whom he admires, and wishes to resemble, and of those for whom he entertains an affection; hence, then, if you find your companions and pleasures amongst the wicked, you are yourself wicked, or in the way of soon being so.

2d Point. Good example is beneficial to all men; bad example is pernicious to all men. Ignorance of evil, and chastity, are the two ramparts of innocence. One remains ignorant of many sins, if he never sees them committed; one has a horror of those sins which he has never seen practised. Could you sit down and eat with a man who was afflicted with the plague? There is less danger to be apprehended from a loathsome infection, than from frequenting the society of a scandalous person. But are you not one yourself? Do you not give bad example to your fellow beings? Are you not as insensible to the diseases of your own soul as a leper is to that of his body?

3d Point. Example sustains and gives license to sin; it renders it honorable, just, easy, and necessary. One is ashamed of innocence, among the guilty; of chastity, among the impure. One blushes not at sin, provided it is clothed with the example and authority of the great, and sanctioned by custom. Examine yourself. Are you not assisting, by your example, to diffuse pestilence in the world? do you not encourage iniquity? do you not teach evil lessons to your children and servants? do you not give license to sin by your scandals?

It is in vain to hope for the approval of God, if you persist in your intercourse with the wicked. One does not become unhealthy by associating with those who are well, but contracts disease frequenting the haunts and company of those who are ill. Evil is contagious, and is more easily communicated than good: the heart is evil, because it is corrupt from the beginning. Man imitates that which he sees done; he desires that which he is for-

bidden to touch; he seeks, with more avidity, the knowledge of good and evil, than all the other fruits of this terrestrial paradise. Your health will continue unimpaired if you do not approach the diseased; you will continue innocent, if you avoid the society of the guilty. One desires to please those whom he loves, and frequent the society of those who give him pleasure. You will never please the wicked, unless you are as wicked as they are; "*I cannot*," says St. Paul, "*be a servant of Jesus Christ, if I still wish to please men.*" Oh, what opinion can we have of those who wish to gain the favor, and please the enemies of Jesus Christ!

FIFTH TUESDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. Example is the cause of salvation, or eternal loss, to men. If you love the paths of danger you will perish therein. You imagine and say that it does you no harm to associate with the wicked and partake of their pleasures, that you are still one of the sheep of Christ's fold, although you live among wolves! Is not this a great and scandalous evil? Can one love and seek, without sinning, the proximate occasions of sin? Can one live with persons who are sick with the plague, without becoming infected? You are lost, if you have ceased to fear eternal loss; if the diseased state of your soul does not alarm you, then are you spiritually dead.

2d Point. Example is a bad master; it teaches evil to those who were before ignorant of it; it entices those to commit it who had always feared it; it enchants those who witness it, it entangles those who pursue it. One learns evil in seeing it committed, and will begin to practice it, after learning it. Occasion engages them, bad company persuades them, temptation urges them, inclination entangles them, until the fear of sin is lost in the act of sinning; passion increases, grace diminishes, chastity is destroyed, ruinous habits are formed, the will becomes hardened, the spirit blind, and they fall into indifference and impenitence. Behold the fruits of bad example! behold the progress and the term of iniquity!

3d Point. If your eye scandalize you, pluck it out, Christian soul; if your hand or your foot scandalize you, cut it off. That is to say, whatever pain or mortification it may cost you to sepa-

rate yourself from evil companions, who cause you to offend God, you should esteem it more dear and valuable than your eyes, more useful than your hands, more necessary than your feet. Do not attach yourselves to those whom you cannot imitate; do not imitate those whom you cannot love; do not endeavor to please those who displease God; fly from those who stand afar off from God; fear not to offend those who do not fear to offend God; renounce the friendship of those who renounce that of God.

Presume not on the strength of your will. You have grace given you to fly the occasions of sin; you have grace to forsake them when you are engaged therein. But will it continue with you, to enable you to remain there, without sinning, when God commands you to abandon them? Is it not the height of presumption, to promise yourself the grace of God, in the occasions of sin, when He positively forbids your going therein? So far from preserving grace, you will be deprived of it, and in your weakness you shall fall under the power of your strong adversary, who on these occasions spreads his snares, tyrannizes, and fights with advantage.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"He that loveth danger shall perish in it." *Eccles.* iii.

"Be not a friend to an angry man; and do not walk with a furious man, lest, perhaps, thou learn his ways, and take scandal to thy soul." *Proverbs*, xxii.

"And if thy right eye cause thee to offend, pluck it out, and cast it from thee." *St. Matt.* v.

"And we charge you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus, Christ, that you withdraw yourself from every brother who walketh disorderly." 2 *Thessalonians*, iii.

"Depart from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs lest you be involved in their sins." *Numbers*, xvi.

FIFTH WEDNESDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Meditation.

ON THE PAINS OF HELL.

1st Point. The wicked are bound to each other, as the roots of tares are united to the clods of earth in which they grow, and at the last day they will be cast together into the unquenchable

fire of hell. What is hell? It is the prison of the justice of God; it is the arsenal of his vengeance; it is the term of his anger and wrath; it is the centre of all evils and the primal essence of death, which has no end; it is the kingdom of Lucifer; it is a dungeon crowded with furies, despairing souls, and the most infamous criminals; it is a region of tears, a place of torments, a world of maledictions, an exile from all consolation, a loss without resource, a toil without rest, a grief without end, an evil without remedy!

2d Point. Souls in hell are eternally separated from God, their sovereign good; they are accursed and hated by Him; they hate God, and He despises them. His hatred for them is infinite, irreconcilable, and eternal. One can appease the anger of God, in this life, by penance; but never, in hell.

There is in heaven all that the soul can desire; there is in hell all that it fears and hates. Pleasure in heaven shall be pure and unmixed with grief; grief shall be pure in hell unmixed with pleasure. In heaven, the desires of the saints are fully satisfied; in hell, the desires of the damned are never satisfied.

3d Point. What does one suffer in hell? The body will be tormented by heat and cold, by fire and ice; but the eye hath never seen, nor can the mind conceive the intensity of that heat, or the degree of that cold. He shall be tormented in all his senses; his eyes, by the sight of devils; his hearing, by the terrific cries of the damned; his smell, by the insupportable stench from the numberless carcasses imprisoned in this common sewer; his taste, by raging hunger and thirst; his feelings, by the extreme heat of a fire which shall penetrate his body, and scorch his marrow, and by all kinds of sickness accompanied by the most poignant griefs. The soul shall be tormented in its spirit, will, imagination, desires, memory, and all its powers, and be surrounded only by frightful and afflicting objects; while, above all, the pain of loss shall be an evil as infinite as God is good.

Oh strange revolution! oh wonderful change! The wicked fly from God on earth, and He pursues them with his tender mercies. But they shall seek for God in hell, and never find Him; or if they find Him, they find an angry God, and that constitutes the pain of loss. They will fly from the face of an offended God without the power to love or appease Him. It may be said that his presence fills heaven with bliss, and hell with anguish; for the saints in heaven are happy because they see and enjoy God, and the damned are miserable in hell because they behold a God all powerful, who will neither succor or love them.

Oh eternity, thou art long! oh eternity, thou art frightful and terrible! Oh *never*, which shall never end! Oh always, which will last forever! Oh present, which is forever linked with the past! oh past, which is forever linked to the present! Oh eternity! shall we never comprehend thee? oh eternity! shall we never know thee? Oh, if we always thought of eternity we should never sin!

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"A land of misery and darkness, where the shadow of death, and no order, but everlasting horror dwelleth." *Job*, x.

"And the unprofitable servant cast ye out into the exterior darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." *St. Matt.* 25.

"Who shall suffer eternal pains in destruction, from the face of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." 2 *Thessalonians*, i.

"Thou shalt make them as an oven of fire, in the time of thy anger: the Lord shall trouble them in his wrath, and fire shall devour them." *Psalm* xx.

FIFTH THURSDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Meditation.

ON THE TWO ETERNITIES, HEAVEN AND HELL.

1st Point. Always living, and never dying; always dying, without the power of living; possessing all, and desiring nothing; desiring every thing, and possessing nothing; resting eternally, without toil or labor; toiling forever, and never resting; always rejoicing, and never sad; always sad, and never rejoicing; loving always, without the power to hate; hating always, without the power to love. Behold the reward of the good! behold the punishment of the wicked!

2d Point. Of these two eternities choose the one which will be the most advantageous to you. One or the other inevitably awaits you. You will find after death the realization of that which you have chosen in life. If you live well, you will find beyond the grave an eternity of perfect bliss; if you live wickedly, you will find after death an eternity of utter and hopeless misery. Measure an eternity with a moment of time; an eternity of rap-

ture with a moment of grief; an eternity of anguish with a moment of pleasure!

3D POINT. Oh, heaven is ineffably lovely! oh, hell is unutterably horrible! This world is deceitful: man is blind. Oh, time is short; eternity is without end. Nothing is long, which at last ends; nothing is short, which never ends.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Oh that they would be wise and would understand, and would provide for their last end." *Deut.* xxxii.

"Where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished." *St. Mark.* ix.

"Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels." *St. Matt.* xxv.

FIFTH FRIDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Meditation.

ON THE HASTY DESIRES OF THE SOUL.

1ST POINT. The servants mentioned in the gospel were anxious to separate the tares from the wheat. Their desire was good in itself, but too hasty and forward. We desire many things because we are poor, or because we are rich. If we are poor, we desire to be raised from our poverty; if we are rich, we desire to scatter our substance, and disencumber ourselves of abundance. The infant, and she who gives it suck, have a mutual desire, one to receive, the other to give. The desire, then, is good, but the eagerness is of no account. It troubles and disturbs the peace of the soul; it confounds its thoughts; it quickens its emotions; it disconcerts its actions; it corrupts its will; it destroys grace; it prevents the co-operation of God, and proves that we are influenced by nature alone.

2D POINT. My soul, are you contented? Do you desire nothing on earth? Does not God satisfy you? Is it not He who is your wisdom, your strength, your sanctity, your peace, your glory, your sovereign happiness? When is it that you have practised Christian virtue without Him? When is it that you have worked evil when you possessed Him?

3D POINT. Your desires are your tyrants. It is your inquietude and hastiness which render you miserable; which tear your heart,

and give it no rest. You will find happiness in desiring nothing. You will be satisfied in your desires only when you possess God. What is it that you have needed which He has not bestowed freely upon you? Desire is a mark of poverty. He who is filled with God desires nothing more; and he who desires any thing inordinately shows that he is not filled with God.

FIFTH SATURDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. I have had dangerous thoughts; I have wished too eagerly to separate the tares from my soul: the desire is good, but all the anxiety is worthless. Why do you desire to do so much? It is not the good pleasure of God that you seek, but your own! Can you accomplish any thing without grace? Can you obtain it without confidence in Him? Is it hoping in God to be always filled with anxiety? Do all that you can, and suffer those things which you cannot perform. A too eager desire for perfection sows tares, instead of rooting them up; chokes the good grain, instead of causing it to grow and produce fruit. One often plucks up the good grain in their hasty endeavors to separate it from the tares.

2d Point. My God, I am miserable! My desires torment me. I wish for that which I have not, and desire not that which I have. The pangs of hell seem to encompass me. Why desire so many earthly goods, when the possession of them will only afford me a delusive pleasure, and the loss of them genuine sorrow? I cannot acquire them without pain; I cannot preserve them without much anxious care; I cannot lose them without disappointment and affliction. Why do I trouble and disquiet myself about the acquisition of spiritual goods, which come from God, and which impart to humble souls patience and tranquillity? It is necessary to desire perfection with all your heart, but it must be without disturbing your peace; without leaning on your own strength; without perplexing your spirit; without exciting your passions; in a word, without eagerness, and without all these efforts of an indiscreet and impetuous nature.

3d Point. Oh my God! henceforth, without Thee, all abundance is only poverty; all sweetness is only bitterness. What is there

in heaven or on earth which can satisfy me without Thee? Of what account will it be, whether I am rich or poor, great or little, perfect or imperfect, provided Thou art satisfied with me? Can I advance without thy grace? Why need I, then, to trouble and vex myself, as if the result of my prayers depended on myself? Alas! Thou hast been in me, and I have sought Thee far hence; Thou hast invited me to rest, and I chose anxiety and fatigue! *Martha! Martha! thou art troubled about many things; and only one thing is necessary.* Mary has chosen the better part; and enjoys my presence in silence and peace. Come, rest with her, troubled soul, and leave without the tumult and anxiety of thy desires. Oh, surely that heart is most avaricious which even God, cannot satisfy!

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Covetousness is the root of all evils; which some desiring, have erred from the faith, and have entangled themselves in many sorrows." 1 *Timothy*, vi.

"They that fear the Lord, will have patience even until his visitation." *Eccles.* ii.

"The desire of the wicked shall perish." *Psalm* cxi.

"Desires kill the slothful." *Proverbs*, xxi.

"Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and art troubled about many things: but one thing is necessary." *Luke*, x.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

THE GOSPEL. *Matt.* xiii. 31–35.

"AT that time, Jesus spoke to the multitude this parable: The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field: which is indeed the least of all seeds: but when it is grown up, it is greater than any herbs, and becometh a tree; so that the birds of the air come, and dwell in the branches thereof. Another parable He spoke to them: The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened. All these things Jesus spoke in parables to the multitudes: and without parables He did not speak them. That the word might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world."

Meditation.

ON THE GOSPEL.

1st Point. A grain of mustard is the smallest of all seeds, notwithstanding which it springs up from the earth, grows in strength and fruitfulness, until it becomes a tree. Jesus may be compared to this little seed in his incarnation, his nativity, and his passion. There is nothing meaner, or more insignificant, in the eyes of the world than his cross; but since it was planted on Calvary, it has become a great and wondrous tree, whose branches spread to the extremities of the earth. The birds of heaven rest therein, and the people of all nations partake of its fruits.

Men of the world commence their designs and undertakings with great and brilliant displays, which end in nothingness. The impious lift themselves up, and seem to flourish like the cedars of Libanus, but in a little while they pass away, and are no longer seen; but the works of God, which appear as of no account in their beginning, become marvellous and grand as they progress and manifest themselves. What was the Church in its origin? It was a little grain, which was despised and trampled under foot by tyrants. What has prayer and faith made it since? You are the least among men; you are poor; you are treated with contempt; you are afflicted; you are misjudged! Be patient, Christian soul: let God act. He called you out of nothingness, and, if you confide and hope in Him, He will work great things for you, and deliver you. It is necessary for the grain to be bruised in the earth, ere it can flourish and bring forth fruit.

2d Point. Jesus in the holy eucharist is as a little seed, hidden from the eyes of men, imperceptible to the senses, despised by unbelievers, and trampled under foot by the wicked; but when He is received into a heart, which, like earth well prepared for planting, has been made ready for his reception by humility and penance, He becomes a great tree, which produces the fruits of eternal life, and which nourishes every power of the soul. The birds of heaven, by which we understand those spiritual souls who are detached from earthly things, rest and delight themselves in the branches of this tree of paradise. Oh, my soul! if you are not pure enough to shake off the entanglements and fetters of earth, as these holy ones have done, in order to rest in the branches of this wonderful and beautiful tree, come and repose

under the shadow thereof; come, gather, and partake of its fruits.

3d Point. Jesus Christ in the holy eucharist is a sacred leaven. The woman of the gospel represents the Blessed Virgin and the holy Church; the three measures of flour signify will, memory, and understanding—wisdom, courage, and goodness. Alas! my heart is dejected and cast down, when I do not receive the sacred leaven of the body and blood of Jesus Christ in holy communion; my soul is heavy; my wisdom merely human; my understanding is disturbed by vain illusions; darkness gathers about me; my courage fails; my piety grows lukewarm and languishing; my spirit is without appetite for heavenly things; it is like bread that is unleavened; it is thick and heavy, and cannot rise above the earth. But after having communicated, and received Jesus into my heart, I am changed; my nature becomes spiritual; the darkness is dispersed; my spirit knows the Lord, and, adoring, gives Him thanks for the fraction of heavenly bread. My heart glows and burns with the fire of divine love! My memory is withdrawn from all the cares of earth; from being lukewarm, I am filled with zeal; I am no longer timid and fearful, but strong in courage; I am no longer sad, but joyful; I am no longer sick, I am healed; I sing, I run, I fly! I exclaim with the divine spouse: "*My well beloved has given me honeycomb to eat.*" Oh, my God! Thou hast blessed me with an unspeakable favor; "*I will go into the store-room, where Thou keepest thy wines, and inebriate myself with its delights.*" Come, oh come, my children, and eat the bread that I have prepared for you; drink the wine that I have drawn from my own veins, and you shall neither hunger nor thirst.

One does not know the properties of a grain of mustard until it is bruised and eaten. Good men here below are like little grains of seed. They are regarded as contemptible and mean; they are plundered, beaten and trampled on by the wicked; but it is only in the gloom of affliction, and amidst stern trials, that their righteousness and love for God shines with a clear and glorious light, like stars at midnight. Their example is also a leaven which communicates its virtues to all those associated with them, by inciting them to high and holy aims; by imparting to them a taste for devotion; by directing their thoughts from earth to heaven, and inspiring them with sentiments of true holiness. Alas! I am the leaven of sin and malice, corrupting all who come under my influence, inspiring them with a love for the world instead of love for God; with vanity instead of humility; with an undue esteem for the things of time instead of those of

eternity. Deliver me, oh my God, deliver me; cast out the bad leaven that corrupts my soul, and bestow on me the precious leaven of thy grace, that I may rise above all earthly considerations, and find delight only in Thee.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Take heed, and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." *St. Matt.* xvi.

"Purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new paste, as you are unleavened." 1 *Corinthians*, v.

"Therefore, let us feast, not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." *Ibid.*

Amen, amen I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." *St. John*, xii.

SIXTH MONDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Meditation.

ON FIDELITY IN LITTLE THINGS.

1st Point. Salvation depends on faith, and on grace, which the Son of God has compared to the least of all seeds; by which it appears that it depends on those things which seem little, and of no account in the eyes of the world. The greatest rivers flow from small and hidden springs; the largest fires are kindled by little sparks; the most magnificent trees spring from small acorns; the most dangerous falls are the result of little sins; the greatest disorders arise from a little infidelity.

2d Point. The great always depend on that which is little for a beginning; the little leads to that which is great and glorious. He who loves another, fears to offend or grieve him, and neglects nothing that he thinks will afford pleasure and gratification to the object of his friendship. Great actions attract the attention and admiration of men; little actions, which men consider beneath their consideration or notice, gain the approval and love of God. Men only regard exterior appearances; God looks into the heart. Every thing is great in his sight which proceeds from love and a desire for his glory. Love is faithful in little things, which are true tests of its purity, strength, and sincerity.

3d Point. A contempt for little things leads us to despise and neglect those which are great. He who fears venial sins will not commit those which are mortal. We gain heaven by avoiding little sins; we lose it by committing them, because they lead to those which bring death to the soul. *He who is faithless in little things will not be faithful in those which are greater.* These are the words of Jesus Christ, and they inspire us with dread and amazement. *He who is faithful over that which is little, will be faithful over that which is great.* These are also the words of Jesus Christ, and they fill us with sweetness and consolation.

Are you among the first? Are you among the latter? Do you regard little things? Do you fear venial sins? Do you despise little rules? Are you faithful to all the inspirations of grace, how little soever they appear? Whence come these great sins into which you fall, if you have hated and avoided those which are little? Whence arises this general disorder and wandering of the senses, if you have mortified yourself in the little irregularities of nature? How can you expect to accomplish that which is great for God's honor and glory, if you refuse to obey Him in little things? Oh my God, as I cannot render Thee any great service, I offer Thee that which is little; since I cannot do those acts which are great and heroic, I will at least do those which are easy to perform. Let us do all that we can, and that which we cannot do of ourselves God will do for us.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"A wise man will fear in every thing." *Eccles.* xviii.

"Give to the Most High, according to what He hath given to thee; and with a good eye do according to the ability of thy hands." *Eccles.* xxxv.

"He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in that which is greater; and he that is unjust in that which is little, is unjust also in that which is greater." *St. Luke*, xvi.

SIXTH TUESDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Meditation.

ON CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

1st Point. A small seed produces a large and perfect tree. It is thus we ought to grow in grace, and steadily advance towards perfection. A child should imitate the virtues of his father, a pic-

ture should resemble its original, an effect its cause, a disciple his master, a soldier his captain. "*Be perfect, as my Father in heaven is perfect*," says the Man-God; "*attend to my words, and follow the example of my life.*" He who does not advance in the school of Jesus Christ, does not deserve to be numbered among his disciples.

2D POINT. A tree does not of necessity decrease because it does not increase. But in the ways of righteousness, if we do not advance we retrograde; if we do not amend we fall into greater evils; if we do not gain we lose; if we do not enrich we impoverish ourselves. One cannot remain inactive on the waves of a deep river; he must struggle or drown; he must either support himself on the surface, by his own efforts and strength, or go down and perish. If you say, Christian soul, that you have done enough, and it is no longer necessary for you to toil through humiliations and mortifications towards perfection, then, indeed, it is to be feared that you are in great peril.

3D POINT. The perfection of God is his own: He possesses it without effort, and retains it without toiling for it. The angels acquired theirs with but little labor; but man can only arrive at his by many and laborious works. Never will you be truly happy, unless you take courage and do violence to yourself. Every thing is wanting in him who thinks he needs nothing.

Grace does not encourage or cherish sloth. Love is a celestial quality which is not pleased with sterility; it is a fire which is never satisfied; it burns on continuously, or extinguishes itself; it increases or diminishes. Barrenness in religion is a crime. It is doing an evil for which there is no remedy. The tree that bore no fruit was cut down and cast into the fire; the talent was taken from him who did not profit by its possession. O my God, I am terrified when I reflect on the time which I have lost. I have, like a prodigal, wasted the wealth of thy graces. I have not increased the treasure Thou hast bestowed on me; I have not advanced in holiness; all the world goes forward, and I alone stand still; all seek perfection, and I alone remain contented with an innumerable multitude of imperfections, which retard my progress.

The artisan makes every effort to learn his trade, and I am indifferent about acquiring a knowledge of mine. The scholar devotes his time to study, and becomes learned, and I continue slothful and ignorant in the ways of heavenly science. Alas, my Lord! I fear Thou wilt take from me the talent I have, and cause me to be cast into the fire as a useless servant. How much of the way have I still to go over? Will not the night overtake

me? It is necessary to run, and I do not even walk. Oh, I see that it is time for me to work out my salvation: I will begin without delay, and will never cease until I finish the good work I have commenced.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Be ye, therefore, perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect." *St. Matt.* v.

"Know you not, that they that run in the race, all run indeed, but one receiveth the prize? So run that you may obtain." 1 *Corinthians*, ix.

"I therefore so run, not as at an uncertainty: I so fight, not as one beating the air: but I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection; lest, perhaps, when I have preached to others I myself should become a castaway." *Ibid.*

"And I said: Now, have I begun: this is the change of the right hand of the Most High." *Psalm* lxxvi.

SIXTH WEDNESDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Meditation.

ON HUMILITY WHICH IS REPRESENTED BY THE SMALL GRAIN OF MUSTARD.

1st Point. What art Thou, my God, and what am I? Thou art all, and I am nothing; Thou hast all knowledge, and I am ignorant; Thou canst do whatever Thou wilt, and I am incapable of performing any thing; Thou art the source of all light, and I am only darkness; Thou art power, and I am weakness; Thou art holiness, and I am wickedness; Thou art the Holy of holies, the King of kings; I am the chief of sinners, the slave of slaves. With Thee, my God, I am wise and strong; without Thee, I am blind and weak.

2d Point. My soul, if you do not humble yourself, God will humble you. What have you that you do not receive from Him? Could you retain and preserve that which you have unaided by Him? All your righteousness, without humility, will not save you. All the sins of your life, with humble repentence, will not damn you. Humility banishes evil from the nature of man, and causes him to find his true place at the foot of the cross. It drives out sin that charity may enter. Were you as wicked as Achab, and repented with the same humility that he did, God would have

mercy on you as He had on him. *He resists the proud, and gives his grace to the humble; He puts down the mighty from their seats, and exalts the weak; He filleth the poor with good things, and the rich, He sendeth empty away.*

3d Point. The virtue of humility repairs the defects of charity. A penitent sinner is in safety and peace, if he is folded in the arms of humility. Oh my soul! let us hide our treasures, lest vanity should enter and rob us of them; let us abase ourselves that God may exalt us; esteem those innocent defects which procure us confusion; love those things which make us appear mean and abject in the eyes of men; suffer contempt with patience, and glory in the cross, which the scorn of the world provides for us; love contempt, desire contempt; love scorn, desire scorn. Behold the five degrees of the throne of humility!

To be good, and parade our righteousness before men, is a dangerous and perilous thing; but to wear the garb of religion to conceal wickedness is a vicious and scandalous act of hypocrisy. To be truly and sincerely pious, without ostentation, is the sign of an humble soul who is in the way of perfection.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Come to me, all ye that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, because I am meek and lowly of heart: and you shall find rest to your souls." *St. Matt.* xi.

"Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." *St. Luke*, xiv.

"If any man desire to be first, he shall be the last of all, and the servant of all." *St. Mark*, ix.

"God hath abolished the memory of the proud, and hath preserved the memory of them that are humble in mind." *Eccles.* x.

SIXTH THURSDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Meditation.

ON THE EFFECTS OF HUMILITY.

1st Point. The first fundamental principle of humility is perfect submission to God, and the subjection to Him of our understanding and will. Our understanding, by believing all that He declares; our will, by doing whatsoever He commands; our understanding, by believing that which we cannot comprehend; our

will, by doing those things which are not agreeable to nature; our understanding, by obeying the precepts of faith; our will, by obeying his laws. "The first duty of righteousness," says St. Thomas, "is to submit the soul and mind to God." Why is it, then, that I am not willing to believe, because I cannot comprehend those mysteries which faith teaches? Be submissive to God. Humiliate yourself under the powerful hand of God. Can you refuse to do so, knowing that on God your salvation depends?

2d Point. The second is, not to prefer ourselves above others; for the apostle tells us to hold every one in respect, and consider all men our superiors. It is natural, and not surprising, that a man should submit himself to one who is lawfully his superior; but it is true humility alone which can lead one to submit to his inferiors. What reasons can you give for endeavoring to exalt yourself? Is there any one living, more impotent, more wicked, more unfaithful than yourself? Take to heart this beautiful lesson of St. Bernard. "There is no danger," says the saint, "in abasing yourself lower than you are, or in esteeming yourself less than you are already; but it is a great and dangerous evil to exalt yourself above your true level, and prefer yourself, in your thoughts, to one who is your superior or equal. Be careful, oh man, and do not prefer yourself to either your superiors, your equals, or your inferiors. How know you but that he whom you now despise will not be one day better than you, or that he is not, even now, in greater favor with God? The Son of God has not commanded you to seek the highest, the middle, or next to the lowest seat at the feast, but He directs you to choose the very lowest."

3d Point. The third is to abase one's self in spirit as much as one is exalted by external circumstances. It is a rule which is observed by nature and art in all their designs. The higher a tree lifts its branches in the air the deeper it strikes its roots into the earth. Workmen dig the foundation of a house in proportion to the height they design raising it. It is thus that God operates in the soul by grace; and on him whom He wishes to elevate to sanctity, He bestows the good foundations of profound humility. The greater you are the more need exists for you to humiliate yourself in all things. "*Whosoever will be first among you, shall be the servant of all,*" says the Man-God. "*For the Son of man, also, is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life for the redemption of many.*" And yet you, who are the least among men, wish to be served; you wish to be obeyed. An archangel only conceived the sin of pride, and he was cast forth

with the velocity of lightning from heaven! If you exalt yourself with him, you shall fall with him into hell.*

SIXTH FRIDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Meditation.

ON OTHER EFFECTS OF HUMILITY.

1st Point. The fourth effect of humility is, to render a soul agreeable to God, and to fill it with his grace. "There is scarcely a page in Holy Writ where we may not read," says St. Augustine, "that God resists the proud and gives his grace to the humble." Water remains not on the mountain, but runs down into the valley, which it enriches and fertilizes. God is an infinite source of good, which seeks to flow out and impart its blessings to men; but it is necessary for a heart to be open ere it will enter. "*On whom*," says He, "*shall I cast my eye, if not on the poor, who have an humble and meek spirit and who tremble at my word?*" God has always regarded the prayers of the humble, and has never despised them. "*He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble.*" "*He hath regarded*," says the Holy Virgin, "*the humility of his handmaid; for behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.*" We shall find true happiness in humility. If we abase ourselves we shall be exalted.

2d Point. The fifth effect of humility is to render a soul tranquil and contented. All vexations and distractions arise from pride. One beholds with pain the elevation of others; one envies the prosperity of another; one desires to be considered and esteemed in the world; one repines and frets when he does not possess those natural advantages which would make him of account, and cause him to be admired and distinguished among men; one cannot endure the inconvenience and humiliations of poverty. Behold the cause of the misery of the proud. On the contrary the humble soul is always contented, because it loves its poverty. "*Learn of me*," says Jesus Christ, "*because I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest to your souls.*" You may seek, but will never find peace or repose, except in humility.

3d Point. Do you wish to be exalted? Abase yourself, for he who lifts himself up shall be put down, and he who humbles him-

* "Words of Scripture" are to be found in the Meditation.

self shall be exalted. If you wish to be invited to take the first place at the feast, choose the last. Do you wish to be honored? then despise all honors; do you wish to be great in heaven? be little on earth; do you wish to be rich in virtue? be poor in spirit, and never cease to remember your miseries; do you wish to know whether you are humble? then "Examine and see," says Cassian, "if you do not contrive to have your own will, if you have not concealed certain things from your superiors, if you have abandoned yourself entirely to the rules of holy obedience, if you are meek and patient, if you have injured any one, and if you suffer with patience and sweetness those injuries which have been inflicted on you, if you are not singular in your opinions, if you do not seek to distinguish yourself above others, if you do not stray from the order of the community, if you are contented with whatever they give you, if you love the meanest things in the house, if you do not speak either too loud or too low, if you have done nothing with pomp, if you esteem yourself the least of all, and as useless service, and unworthy, the good that you have done." O my God, what will become of me? Without humility I cannot be saved, and I have not even the shadow of this virtue. I am so infected with pride, that I almost despair of being able to acquire humility, no matter how great the efforts I may make. O Jesus, the most humble of the sons of men, bestow on me, as a free gift, that grace, which I cannot purchase by merit. I willingly resign all that Thou hast given me, if Thou wilt bestow on me humility of soul.*

SIXTH SATURDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Meditation.

ON AN INTERIOR LIFE WHICH IS REPRESENTED BY A GRAIN OF MUSTARD.

1st Point. We should offer to God an exterior and an interior worship, because we have a body and soul, and are members of the fold of Jesus Christ. In this, we make an exterior profession of faith; but we should, also, with unwearied diligence, guard and cultivate all interior grace, because God is a spirit whom we ought to adore in spirit and in truth; and grace imitates nature,

* "Words of Scripture" are to be found in the Meditation.

which first creating the inner germ which contains the true life, before the exterior form is completed. And you, oh hypocritical soul! conceal your evil nature, and under a veil of piety, hide a wicked and corrupt heart.

2D POINT. Good exterior actions are alike performed by the righteous and the wicked, by the true servants of God and hypocrites; and there is nothing to distinguish them, except the interior motives which actuate them. A lamp which contains no oil is soon extinguished, and exterior virtue, which is not nourished by interior grace, cannot exist for any length of time. A good work ought to proceed from interior light, by which alone that which is good can be discovered; from prudence, which examines the circumstances it reveals; from grace, which enlightens the mind, touches the heart, and appeals to the will, which yields consent. Is not all this interior?

3D POINT. True virtue cannot form an alliance with vice; the exterior appearance of men is often deceptive, and cloaks, under a mask of virtue, a diabolical malice. It is not, then, in an exterior life that true righteousness consists? It is emphatically the duty of every Christian to keep the commandments of God, and work without ceasing for his salvation. Is not this interior? If, in order to become perfect, it is only necessary to give alms freely, what will become of the poor who can give nothing? If it is only necessary to perform corporal works of mercy, what will become of the sick who are unable to do any thing? If it is only necessary to say long prayers and engage in frequent devotions, what will become of artisans, and many others who are constantly occupied with the duties of their charge, or by the necessities of their state? It is not, then, in an exterior life of piety that perfection consists, but in an interior one, though they often act in concert and cannot be separated from each other.

Oh my God, these truths console and comfort me! they convince me how truly Thou desirest my salvation. I believed, until now, that in order to be holy and perfect it was necessary to do many good works with pomp and expenditure, to be careful and attentive to all that pertains to exterior devotion, and to practice many austerities; but it is not so. What excuse have I, then, for not loving God? Have I not a heart which was formed to love Him? Cannot I desire to love Him, and perform all my actions with reference to his divine will and pleasure? *All the glory of the daughter of the king comes from within.* It is true that she is arrayed in a robe of gold, embroidered with many flowers, but it is not the exterior splendor which makes her glorious, but the in-

terior purity of holiness. God accepted the offerings of Abel because *He considered his heart*, and found that it was filled with true devotion. Do not neglect the practices of exterior devotion and good works, but attend chiefly to the cultivation and perfection of your interior life. Cherish profound and interior, pure and elevated intentions; an ardent love for God, and a low esteem for yourself. Above all, do not form a large circle of acquaintances, which are a cause of incessant distraction, but animate all your actions with a devoted, religious, and sincere spirit. These are the means by which you may arrive at perfection.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"All the glory of the king's daughter is within." *Psalm* xliv.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in a field." *St. Matt.* xiii.

"And when you fast, be not as the hypocrites, sad; for they disfigure their faces that they may appear unto men to fast." *St. Matt.* vi.

"God is a spirit, and they that adore Him must adore Him in spirit and in mind." *St. John*, iv.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

THE GOSPEL. *Matt.* xx. 1–16.

"AT that time, Jesus spoke to his disciples this parable: The kingdom of heaven is like to a householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard. And having agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour, he saw others standing in the market-place idle. And he said to them: Go ye also into my vineyard, and I will give you what shall be just. And they went their way. And again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did in like manner. But about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing, and he saith to them: Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say to him: Because no man hath hired us. He saith to them: Go ye also into my vineyard. And when evening was come, the lord of the vineyard said to his steward: Call the laborers, and pay them their hire, beginning from the last even to the first. When, therefore, they had come, that came about the eleventh hour, they received every

man a penny. But when the first also came, they thought that they should have received more; and they also received every man a penny. And receiving it, they murmured against the master of the house, saying: These last have worked but one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us that have borne the burden of the day and the heats. But he, answering, said to one of them: Friend, I do thee no wrong; didst thou not agree with me for a penny? Take what is thine, and go thy way: I will also give to this last even as to thee. Or, is it not lawful for me to do what I will? Is thy eye evil, because I am good? So shall the last be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen."

Meditation.

ON THE GOSPEL.

1st Point. The householder of the gospel signifies God, who has placed us in the world, not to rest, but to labor; not to amass riches, but to work out our salvation. All the labors of this life, however long it may be, appear only like the toils of a single day after we have received our recompense. What can exceed the loving-kindness of God who calls us, invites us, and seeks us from morning until night; that is to say, from the commencement of life to the end thereof. He calls us by his inspirations, by his angels, by his word, by holy confessors, by pious books, by good examples, by prosperity, by adversity, and by afflictions. How often has He again received you after you have been careless and slothful in the affair of your salvation; after you have betrayed his interests, and abandoned the work He has given you to do? How often has He said to you: Go and work in my vineyard, and I will recompense you.

2d Point. The fruit of this vineyard represents the passion of Jesus Christ, who was put under the pressure of sufferings that he might yield the precious and delicious wine of his blood. It is necessary to work in this vineyard by continual meditations on his bitter sufferings! This vine is the Holy Eucharist, through which we are united to Jesus Christ by communion, as a branch to the vine from which it draws its life, its substance and fruit. Hear what our Lord says: "*I am the true vine; and my Father is the husbandman. I am the vine · you are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit; for without me, you can do nothing. If any one abide not in me he shall be cast forth as a branch, and shall wither, and they shall*

gather him up, and cast him into the fire, and he burneth. I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he will take away; and every one that beareth fruit he will purge it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in me." Are you a living branch of this celestial vine? Are you an unproductive branch? Are you not separated and cut off from the vine? Do you not fear that this will be your condemnation to be cast into the fire?

3D POINT. Under the similitude of a vine recognize your soul, which requires the most unwearied watchfulness and care, that it may bear much fruit. What do not men do to render a vine fruitful? They bind it up, trim it, and surround it with those composts which will most enrich it. A vine will weep when it is cut; and if it had intelligence and the power of language, would complain that it had been treated cruelly and unjustly. But the husbandman would say, that such a course was necessary to make it fruitful, and if it were not thus wounded it would have to be cut off and burned. You weep and complain when God deprives you of your goods, when He takes from you your health, or recalls to himself those on whom you have set your affections, but has it never occurred to you, that without these afflictions your soul would have borne none of the fruits of righteousness. Cut off, then, all that is superfluous in yourself, for it must be cut or burned.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Catch us the little foxes that destroy the vines." *Canticles*, ii.

"Turn again, oh God of hosts, look down from heaven and see, and visit this vineyard; and perfect the same which thy right hand hath planted." *Psalm* lxxix.

"He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit." *St. John*, xv.

"He will bring those evil men to an evil end, and will let out his vineyard to other husbandmen that shall render him fruits in due season." *St. Matt.* xxi.

MONDAY AFTER SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

Meditation.

ON THE SMALL NUMBER OF THOSE WHO ARE SAVED.

"*Many are called, but few are chosen.*"

1st. Point. The deluge inundated the world, and of all its inhabitants only eight were saved. Six hundred thousand fighting men went out of Egypt, and only two entered the land of promise. A whole field is sown with grain, and only one fourth part of it is productive. Many run together in a race, but of all who contend only one gains the prize. Are you he who shall be crowned? Are you fervent in the service of God? Do you run the race which leads to perfection? Are you not inordinately attached to earth and the things thereof? Do you not grow weary in the race, and say you can run no longer?

2d Point. There are two gates through which souls enter the eternal world. Of these one is great, the other small; one is wide, the other narrow. The first opens into a miserable and bitter eternity; the latter, into an eternity of joy which has no end. There are only two roads that lead to them; one is on the right, the other on the left. The right conducts men safely to heaven, the left leads them direct to hell. The right is frequented by only a few poor and toiling pilgrims; the left is crowded with a multitude who are filled with merriment and delights. The right is rugged and difficult; the left is smooth and pleasant. There are but few who select the steep and narrow way on the right. The left is the choice of the world. In which of these two roads are you?

I can only know by the fruits of my life which road I follow; whether I can hope to be saved, or expect to be damned. In the narrow right-hand path we mortify our senses, suppress our passions, and do continual violence to nature; we cut off all unlawful pleasures, and deprive ourselves of many that are lawful; we retrench all superfluities, and retain only those things which are necessary; we obey with joy and alacrity the commandments of God, and even those counsels which are painful and cost us much. The road on the left is filled with voluptuousness, sloth, and licentiousness. Those who walk therein deny themselves no gratification; they shrink from the slightest inconvenience or difficulty; their lives are devoted to good cheer, of which they

enjoy an abundance, and to the amusements of the world. They entertain a horror of penance, and abandon themselves to their passions.

Oh, most merciful God! I have much reason to fear that my salvation is in peril! I fear that I am in the left-hand road, for I find myself surrounded by a multitude who all hurry along with heedless steps and sounds of tumult in the same direction. I follow whither they lead, and do not obey the voice of conscience which urges me to leave them and go elsewhere. My life is crowned with pleasure and ease. I think not of mortifying myself in any particular, and do no penance. Oh, I know well that the road which leads to heaven is the one I ought to choose, but it is steep, it is rugged and difficult. Few walk therein. I know that I cannot be saved unless I join the number of those pilgrims, who, with their eyes fixed on heaven, bless the toilsome way that conducts them thither. I also know that I must be inevitably damned if I continue with the heedless throng who have chosen the road which terminates in the abyss of eternal perdition.

3d Point. My soul, ponder well these words: "*Many are called, but few are chosen.*" Let us hasten to seek the narrow path of repentance and mortification. Let us fly, for our lives, from the broad and pleasant road that leads to hell. Alas! what will it avail me to have gained the world's all, of honor, fame, wealth, luxury, and ease, if, after death, I am condemned to an eternity of misery and anguish unspeakable? Oh my God, help me, lead me, guide me into the rough and narrow way which will at last bring me to a place of eternal repose and perpetual light.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Enter ye in at the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction; and many there are who go in thereat. How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way, that leadeth to life; and few there are that find it." *St. Matt.* vii.

"Strive to enter by the narrow gate; for many, I say to you, shall seek to enter and not be able." *St. Luke*, xiii.

"This way of theirs is a stumbling-block to them; and afterwords they shall delight in their mouth. They are laid in hell like sheep; and death shall feed upon them." *Psalm* xlviii.

"There is a way that seemeth just to a man; but the ends thereof lead to death." *Proverbs*, xiv.

TUESDAY AFTER SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

Meditation.

WHY SO FEW ARE SAVED.

1st Point. It was the design of God that all men should be saved. He bestows free-will and understanding on all who come into the world; He refuses his grace to none; He delivered his only Son to a painful and ignominious death for the salvation of sinners. "*I desire not the death of him that dieth*," saith the Lord God, "*return ye and live.*" He never abandons a soul which does not first abandon Him. He seeks from morning until night for laborers to work in his vineyard. Why, then, are so few saved?

2d Point. It is because nature is corrupt and has an insatiable craving for evil and forbidden things; because the children of men refuse to do violence to their natural inclinations, and hold no rein over their passions; they are governed by sensual pleasures which debauch the heart; they live according to the maxims of the world which are opposed to the precepts of Jesus Christ; they live in sin, and scoff at penance and humility; or, if they do penance at all, they either do it without the proper dispositions, or postpone it until the hour of death. It is because they cease sinning only when it is no longer in their power to sin. They never think of God, they refuse to hear his word, and will not keep his commandments. It is, finally, because they die as they have lived, and as men for the most part live in sin, it is not to be wondered at that they die in sin.

3d Point. God despises in death those who have despised Him in life. The enemy of souls rarely suffers the prey he has secured in life to escape him at the hour of death. It is difficult, indeed, to destroy in old age a habit contracted in early youth. The wicked carry with them to the grave the vices of their early years; these penetrate the marrow of their bones, and sleep with them under the dust. What miracle is it, after this, that so many are damned and so few saved?

O my God, if I am saved, it will be by thy free and infinite grace; if I am damned, it will be through my own blind and perverse malice. What is there that Thou hast not done for me? Has thy grace ever been wanting to me? Is it not in my power to receive the sacraments, which are the certain means of salvation? Can I not at all times do penance for my sins, since Thou hast commanded it? Cannot I perform those things which so

many others have done who have the same weaknesses that I have? "*O Israel, if thou art lost, it shall be through thy own fault,*" saith the Lord; "*if thou art saved, it shall be through my grace and through my mercy, which are wanting to none.*"

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"What is there that I ought to do more to my vineyard that I have not done to it?" *Isaias*, v.

"His bones shall be filled with the vices of his youth; and they shall sleep with him in the dust." *Job*, xx.

"Destruction is thy own, O Israel; thy help is only in Me." *Osee*, xiii.

"The holy man is perished out of the earth; and there is none upright among men." *Micheas*, vii.

WEDNESDAY AFTER SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

Meditation.

ON ENVY.

1st Point. The envious laborer murmured because the householder gave as much recompense to those who came into the vineyard at the eleventh hour, as to them who had borne the burden and heat of the day.

What is *envy?* It is a black and diabolical passion, whose hell is the happiness of others, and whose happiness is only found in the miseries and anguish of the unfortunate.

It is an extravagant passion, which always pursues the light, yet cannot endure its effluence; which regards virtue, but cannot support the applause it wins.

It is an unjust and unreasonable passion, which hates a man because he is good, and proceeds with rancor against him because he is happy and without crime.

It is a detestable passion, which would destroy the source of all good, and break the union which binds together the commerce of nature with grace and glory.

2d Point. What is envy? It is an insolent passion which would, if possible, institute a judicial contest against the providence of God, and take from Him the government of the world, because He prospers the good and blesses the just.

It is an infernal passion, which tortures the damned, who be-

hold afar off those who are saved enjoying an unclouded felicity, of which they are hopelessly and eternally deprived; and who suffer, in all their senses, the fire which consumes them, and the worm that, never dying, preys on them.

It is a malicious passion, which wars against the Holy Ghost; and takes offence at the prosperity and virtues of others, while it endeavors to spread its venom over the graces which render them worthy of the love of God and the esteem of men.

Finally, it is a despairing passion, and an evil without remedy, because it closes every avenue of the human heart to the influences of grace, and seeks its only relief in the ruin of innocence.

3D POINT. Are you not under the dominion of this vice? Does not the prosperity of your neighbor afflict and disturb you? Do you not rejoice in his adversity? Are you not vexed at the abundance of his temporal possessions? This is the first step. Are you not displeased at his spiritual treasures, such as the spirit of wisdom, counsel, fortitude, and other gifts of the Holy Ghost? This is the second step. Do you not envy him those supernatural gifts which enrich him, such as those of grace, integrity, perfection, and sanctity? This is the third step. Alas! miserable and haughty creature, you are animated by the fury and malice of the devil, and shall suffer, unless you repent speedily, the same punishment with him through all eternity. Be afraid, tremble at the terrible horrors which await the envious; humble yourself by true contrition, and learn to rejoice in the good of your fellow beings, and love your neighbor as yourself.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Is thy eye evil because I am good?" *St. Matt.* xx.

"Soundness of heart *is* the life of the flesh; *but* envy *is* the rottenness of the bones." *Proverbs*, xiv.

"But by the envy of the devil, death came into the world." *Wisdom*, ii.

"A man that maketh haste to be rich, and envieth others, is ignorant that poverty shall come upon him." *Proverbs*, xxviii.

"For whereas there is among you envying and contention, are you not carnal, and walk according to man?" 1 *Corinthians*, iii.

THURSDAY AFTER SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

Meditation.

ON THE MALICIOUS AND MISERABLE RESULTS OF ENVY.

1st Point. Envious persons outrage nature, which produces only that which is good, and grace, which cannot act in concert, or ally itself with any evil, because they derive their happiness and satisfaction from the disasters, the evils, and sorrows which afflict their fellow men. When the enemy of God wishes to ensnare souls through any of the other vices, he invariably clothes the temptation in those allurements which appeal to the gratification of the senses. But to the envious he presents only vexation and trouble. It is this which causes the envious to resemble those malicious spirits, who are miserable because they cannot endure the contemplation of the happiness of others, and who desire to work evil, although they know it cannot profit them in any way.

2d Point. An envious person is the enemy of all, and inflicts mortal wounds on charity. As charity is the root of all virtues, it may be said that envy is the chief of all vices. It was the cruel beast that devoured the innocent Joseph. An avaricious man is averse to sharing his goods with others, and will resort to every stratagem to prevent others from using them. He is a monster of iniquity and injustice, to whom the tranquillity of a good conscience is inconceivable.

3d Point. An envious person sins against the Holy Ghost, opposes every blessing that He would communicate to the soul, and endeavors to extinguish his love. The apostate makes war against his truth, and the envious his divine goodness. Both offend the love and truth of the Spirit of God. It is this which renders their sin so heinous that it is supposed to be unpardonable. All other vices make war only against those virtues which are opposed to them. Envy makes war with every virtue, because it cannot bear that any of them should be praised, valued, or practised. Are you not the slave of this diabolical passion? Are you pleased at beholding your equals esteemed and honored? Does not their elevation cast you down and make you sad? does not their courage seem to enfeeble you? does not their downfall exalt and delight you? Are you proud? Then you are envious; you spurn at the idea of having either a superior or equal, and when one is elevated above you, envy seizes on you

and reigns within you. Oh detestable sin! which inflicts misery through the happiness of others. Oh diabolical evil! which deprives one of the inestimable merits of charity!

FRIDAY AFTER SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. The envious person is the most miserable of all human beings. He nourishes vipers which sting and devour him. He is diseased because others are healthy, and displeased because others rejoice and are glad. "*Can they*," says the Son of God, "*gather grapes on thorn bushes, or figs from brambles?*" Do they not, on the contrary, gather thorns instead of grapes from the vine, and brambles instead of fruit from the fig-tree? It is the way of the envious to poison whatever good they come in contact with, and seek torment in the felicity of others.

2d Point. An envious person is separated from the communion of the Church because he enters not into the communion of charity. He has no part in the merits of the saints, which would increase his spiritual treasures, if he loved them. But because he is incapable of loving holiness he cannot participate in the merits of those who practise it. He is, then, the most wicked and miserable of all men.

3d Point. Pride removes us far away from God; hatred separates us from our neighbor; anger disorders the mind, and causes us to consider only ourselves; but envy separates us from God, our neighbor, and arrays us ever against the best interests of our souls; for it is pride which gives birth to it, hatred which preserves it, sadness which nourishes it, anger which burns and inflames it. "They shall know," says the Son of God, "that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another;" and "they shall know," declares Satan, "that ye are my disciples, if ye hate one another."

Love your neighbor, consult his interests, rejoice in his prosperity, sympathize with him in his adversity, envy not his glory, forbear to wound his reputation. If you possess charity, it will, like a magnet, draw all blessings unto you; but if you are without it, your soul will become like the desert, in which neither green leaf nor water is found, or like a barren tree, which hath no fruit, and is only fit to be cast into the fire; for God, finding you

unworthy of so divine a treasure, will deprive you of all those graces which can only be preserved and guarded by charity.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Where envying and contention is, there is inconstancy and every evil work." *James*, iii.

"Anger indeed killeth the foolish, and envy slayeth the little one." *Job*, v.

"The eye of the envious is wicked: and he turneth away his face, and despiseth his own soul." *Eccles.* xiv.

"Neither will I go with consuming envy: for such a man shall not be partaker of wisdom." *Wisdom*, vi.

SATURDAY AFTER SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

Meditation.

REMEDY FOR ENVY.

1st Point. Is it necessary for your eye to see evil, that you may seek out wickedness, because God is good, patient, and merciful? If you love God, your chief delight will consist in his being honored and loved by all creatures. "*Oh that all the people might prophecy*," said Moses, "*and that the Lord would give them his Spirit.*" Behold a man who loved God, and sought only his glory! one who always rejoiced in the righteousness and prosperity of his neighbor, and carried before the Lord the distresses of others as if they had been his own! It is impossible that you should love God, unless you desire to see him loved, served, and honored by all his creatures, and rejoice therein.

The disciples of St. John the Baptist were dissatisfied because Jesus baptized and all men resorted to Him. St. John, on the contrary, was overjoyed, and declared to them these words: "*This my joy is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease.*" When you love your neighbor you will derive more gratification from seeing him honored and sought after than yourself. Should you not love him? Is he not your brother, if not according to nature, at least according to grace? Are you not children of the same faith, members of the same mystical body? and who ever beheld so unnatural a spectacle as two members bearing malice and envy towards each other? On the contrary, when one is diseased or wounded, the rest sympathize; and when one is healed, the others

rejoice; when one suffers, all suffer; when its health and strength returns, all are consoled.

2D POINT. Were your love actuated by high and true motives, you would find much happiness in the joy of others, for charity will render you a participant in whatever blessings your neighbor may receive. Spiritual possessions do not, like corporeal treasures, diminish according to the vast numbers who receive them. Your neighbor toils for you when he works for himself, if you are united to him by the bonds of Christian affection. Charity makes no distinction of persons; she gives to all in common, and gives freely, without diminishing her store. Why, then, will you persevere in wickedness? What will it profit you to nourish this diabolical passion of envy? Alas! it will only remove you farther from God, and injure you irreparably!

3D POINT. Humility is the true antidote for envy. Envy is the offspring and sister of pride. One is afflicted at the prosperity of others, because his proud nature cannot brook the idea of an equal or a superior. At the moment Lucifer conceived the sin of pride, he became envious. Pride and envy are, therefore, the offspring of the devil, and if you indulge in one you cannot escape the detestable sin of both. If you wish to make him your example in life, you shall be eternally miserable with him after death.

Peace will never fold her wings in your soul if you have not humility; and it is only when you are truly humble that you will rejoice in seeing others more beloved, more esteemed, more occupied, more honored, more wealthy, more virtuous, more holy and perfect, than yourself. Content yourself with being more humble than they are, and you shall possess a treasure equal to their costliest goods.

4TH POINT. The early Christians were happy because they were governed by one heart, one soul, and were animated by the same spirit. All goods were in common among them, because they were animated by a pure and disinterested charity. From whence arise the malice, the enmities, the sighs, the defiances, the slanders, the calumnies, the lawsuits, and all the blackest crimes of humanity, if not from pride and envy? Emulate and nourish charity, love God as the primitive Christians did, and, like them, you will enjoy a happiness as enduring and profound as it is divine; a peace which the world can neither give nor take away.

The devil tempted our first parents through envy. It was envy that led Cain to murder Abel his brother. Esau hated and persecuted his brother Jacob through envy. The brethren of Joseph were urged by envy to sell him to strangers and idolators.

Saul made war against David through envy. The Jews crucified Jesus Christ through envy. Through the diabolical sin of envy death entered into the world, and it has, in all ages, been the occasion of the damnation of the greater part of those who are lost. Do you wish to belong to the miserable congregation of the envious? Consider the malice and magnitude of the vice which governs them, behold their misery, reflect on their chastisements; think with horror of being their companion in hell, where all generous, friendly, and loving emotions will be forever banished from your soul; where you can never perform a virtuous act, or receive good from any source; where this vice will sharpen every pang and horror of your dark abode, and scourge you in all your senses through eternity.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"He that rejoiceth at another man's ruin shall not go unpunished." *Proverbs*, xvii.

"When thy enemy shall fall, be not glad: and in his ruin let not thy heart rejoice; lest the Lord see, and it displease Him, and He turn away his wrath from him." *Proverbs*, xxiv.

"Let us not become desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another." *Galatians*, v.

"I am a partaker with all them that fear Thee, and that keep thy commandments." *Psalm* cxviii.

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

THE GOSPEL. *St. Luke*, viii. 4–15.

"AT that time, when a very great multitude was gathered together, and hastened out of the cities to meet Jesus, he spoke by a similitude. A sower went out to sow his seed: and, as he sowed, some fell by the way-side, and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And other some fell upon a rock; and, as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And other some fell among thorns, and the thorns, growing up with it, choked it. And other some fell upon good ground, and sprung up, and yielded fruit an hundred-fold. Saying these things He cried out: He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And his disciples asked Him what this parable might be. To whom he said: To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but to the rest in parables; that seeing,

they may not see, and hearing, they may not understand. Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God, and they by the way-side are they that hear; then the devil cometh, and taketh the word out of their hearts, lest, believing, they should be saved. Now they upon a rock are they who, when they hear, receive the word with joy, and these have no roots; for they believe for awhile, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they who have heard, and gone their way, are choked with the cares, the riches, and the pleasures of this life; and yield no fruit. But that on good ground are they who, in a good and perfect heart, hearing the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience."

Meditation.

ON THE GOSPEL.

1st Point. It is Jesus Christ who sows good thoughts in the mind, and heavenly desires in the heart, which produce joy, peace, and holiness; the devil, on the contrary, is the enemy of God and man, who sows tares, that is to say, evil thoughts and bad desires, which bring forth sin, and the fruits thereof. Oh what more divine seed than the body of Jesus Christ, which we receive in holy communion! Oh how admirable and beautiful are the fruits He produces, when He enters into a soul that is well prepared to receive Him! Oh what peace, what joy, what consolation is imparted to the soul which receives Him devoutly!

Have you not listened for many years to the word of God? How is it, then, that you have profited so little by it? Is it not because it is trodden under foot, that is to say, that you mingle too much with the world, partake too often of its follies, and give admission into your soul to a multitude of vain imaginations and evil thoughts? Is it not because you have too great a concern about the affairs and possessions of this life? Is it not because you seek too incessantly the pleasure and gratification of your senses? Is it not because you have a soul, which may be compared to a rock, that receives but refuses to nourish the word of God, and becomes more hardened and confirmed in iniquity? Alas! it is to be feared that this is the case. Oh what a terrible account you will be called on to render your Judge for having allowed this divine seed to be lost and made useless to you!

2d Point. A good heart resembles rich soil, which of itself brings forth only thorns and brambles, but when it is prepared and sowed by the husbandman yields a valuable and fruitful

harvest. It is thus with our hearts, which, without the grace of God, can neither do, think, or desire any thing but evil; but enriched by his grace, they bring forth a fruition unto eternal life. The earth alone could not produce fruits, neither could the seed, if it remained separated from the soil; but seed sown in the earth is made abundantly fruitful by the warmth and nourishment it receives therefrom. Thus it is not the heart separated from grace, or grace separated from the heart, which causes celestial virtues and good works to germinate, but it is the heart vivified and strengthened by its union with grace. The earth suffers itself to be clothed and stripped without complaint. It brings forth no fruit unless it is cultivated, worked, and broken to its very depths. Thus the soul is sterile if it is not stirred, ploughed up, and disturbed by crosses, temptations, and humiliations. Winter is as necessary to the earth as summer, night as day, dryness as well as rain. Why, then, despond, and fear that you are lost in seasons of darkness, dryness, and aridity?

3D POINT. Cultivated earth, after it is watered by rain, brings forth abundant harvests, and receives the blessing of God. But that earth, which, notwithstanding all, produces only "*thorns and briars, is rejected,*" says St. Paul, "*and very near to a curse, whose end is to be burnt.*" Alas, my God! I fear that I have incurred thy displeasure. Thou hast cared tenderly and unceasingly for my soul since the hour of its birth; Thou hast bestowed abundant graces on it; Thou hast watered it with heavenly rain, and warmed it with the sunshine of thy love; Thou hast cultivated, sown, and nourished it with thy divine mercies, and, notwithstanding all, it produces only the evil fruits of vice and sin. Oh my God, withhold thy curse for a season, that I may begin at once, and co-operate faithfully with thy grace, and bring forth an abundant harvest. I will work in patience that the fruits of righteousness may be born in my soul, flourish, and live forever.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Every word of God is fire-tried: He is a buckler to them that hope in Him." *Proverbs*, xxx.

"For of his own will hath He begotten us by the word of truth." *St. James*, i.

"Ye that fear the Lord, love Him; and your hearts shall be enlightened." *Eccles.* ii.

"Blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it." *St. Luke*, xi.

MONDAY AFTER SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

Meditation.

ON THE EXCELLENCE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE WORD OF GOD.

1st Point. God created the world by his word, and He resolved to save it by his word. He ransomed men from eternal death by his incarnate word, and He wills that they shall be saved only by the same word, preached and announced. The Holy Ghost is produced in the heart of God and in the hearts of men: in the heart of God, by his interior word; in the heart of man, by his exterior word.

Jesus Christ speaks by the mouth of his preachers. He it is that enlightens their minds, that inflames their hearts, and that gives speech to their tongues. It is Jesus who comes to you, clothed with the sound of his word, as He came from the womb of the Holy Virgin clothed in her flesh. When you read a pious book, you should attend and lay to heart the holy lessons it teaches, for it is God who speaks to you from its pages. His written word is a sacrament of salvation, of which the letters are a kind of species which conceal Jesus who is the spirit and sense thereof.

The uncreated word, united with the created word, seeks an entrance into our hearts to enrich and sanctify them. What impiety and sacrilege to despise this sacrament; to trample under foot the Son of God; to spill and profane his blood! You are guilty of this when you despise his word.

2d Point. "*My sheep know my voice*," says the Divine Shepherd. You are not, then, of the sheep of his fold if you neither hear nor recognize his voice. Your heart will bring forth only a harvest of thorns and brambles, if you do not receive this divine seed. Blessed is the womb that bore the incarnate word. More blessed is the heart which receives the same word announced, that enters in and gives it eternal life. But miserable and unhappy is he who would suppress and extinguish this divine word in its birth. He is more guilty than Herod, who sought to destroy Him, but could not accomplish it.

Alas, how often have I not been guilty of this thing! how often have I not prevented the birth of Jesus in my soul! how often have I destroyed his life, after having conceived Him, by his divine word! I receive this divine seed, and it produces nothing either in my soul or mind; I eat of this celestial bread, and it does me no good. and imparts to me no strength.

3D POINT. The word of God perverts those whom it does not convert. It works evil for those to whom it does no good; it damns those whom it does not save; it kills him whom it does not cure. It is impossible for me to be saved if I do not hear it: and if hearing, I do not profit by it, I shall be inevitably damned. I must, therefore, not only hear but also profit by it.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Blessed is the womb that bore thee, and the paps that gave thee suck." *St. Luke*, xi.

"He that turneth away his ears from hearing the laws, his prayer shall be an abomination." *Proverbs*, xxviii.

"Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." *St. Matt.* iv.

"See that you refuse not him that speaketh." *Hebrews*, xii.

TUESDAY AFTER SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1ST POINT. The deceitfulnesss of riches suppresses the growth and fruition of the seed that God sows in the human heart. The desire of having, the care of preserving, the dread of losing them, and the grief which ensues after they are lost, are the thorns which prevent the increase of this divine seed. If you desire and strive inordinately to possess earthly riches, you will assuredly forfeit those of heaven; and you shall gather from your labor only thorns, which will torment you in time and in eternity.

2D POINT. An avaricious man is devoid of faith, since he entertains sentiments contrary to the gospel. Jesus promises many blessings to the poor, but the avaricious are an abomination to Him. How, then, can the rich and avaricious believe themselves happy, when they are separated from the only source of *true* happiness? If He esteems the poor, and imparts his choicest blessings to their state, should we not love poverty? If He declares that riches are evil and perilous to the soul should we desire them? Faith is opposed to and combats with avarice, and avarice contends against faith. In order to preserve one it is necessary to lose the other. If you sincerely desire to preserve faith you must overcome and destroy avarice.

3D POINT. The avaricious man neither thinks of nor hopes for eternal treasures, for who can hope for or value that in which they have no faith? If he believed that true riches were laid up in heaven would he not labor to acquire them? He is indifferent to the truth of the existence of God, because a belief in one from whom he expects nothing would not conduce to his temporal interests.

What hope is there for the rich if the poor lift up their voices to God and accuse them? if the widow and orphan witness against them? Do they not idolize their gold? do they not sacrifice to it every faculty of their minds? do they not sacrifice to it their hope and salvation? do they place their trust in any thing beyond it? Are you not one of those impious, unbelieving, and idolatrous souls? What have been your thoughts? whither have your desires tended? why, then, do you afflict yourself?

What will you gain by amassing so many goods, except sorrow, spiritual pain, torment and disquietude? Insensible wretch! this night thy soul shall be required of thee; and what will become of thy possessions? Can you carry them with you beyond the grave? It is an inexorable truth, that you will have to lay down your gold and treasures at the gate of death! The camel cannot pass through the eye of a needle. Oh fool! to incur damnation for perishable things. Oh avaricious heart, that God himself cannot satisfy! Oh miserable and unhappy one, to waste your time in laboring for those who shall come after you, and do nothing for the safety of your own soul!

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"There is not a more wicked thing than to love money: for such a one setteth even his own soul to sale." *Eccles.* x.

"If thou be rich, thou shalt not be free from sin." *Eccles.* xi.

"Having heard these things, he was sorrowful: for he was very rich." *St. Luke*, xviii.

"How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God? For it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." *Ibid.*

WEDNESDAY AFTER SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. There is nothing more displeasing to God than an avaricious man. He is without charity, because his heart dwells where his treasures are. Can we serve two masters? can we love God and mammon? Cupidity is opposed to charity. The cupidity of riches is infinite; it occupies the heart, and absorbs every faculty. It is a difficult thing to effect great gains without being guilty of great injustice. He who desires only to enrich himself and hoard up treasures, appropriates to himself all that he can with impunity lay his hands on, and returns nothing. Nature is satisfied with that which is necessary to its support, but avarice is insatiable and sets no bounds to its desires. Legitimate gains are slow. Great profits are nothing more or less than great frauds, and accumulated acts of injustice. How, then, can an avaricious man, who has neither faith, hope, or charity, be saved?

2d Point. An avaricious man is incapable of discovering his sins, because he becomes spiritually blind. And when his conscience whispers, and would reveal them to him, he refuses to listen or do penance. All his frauds and dishonest practices appear to him just and innocent: the stolen water is sweeter to him than that which he is permitted to use, that is, he values more that which he has acquired by diabolical ingenuity and craft than his lawful gains. Restitution becomes an impossibility. As all his passions have contributed to his robberies all assist in defending them. But without restoring his ill-gotten possessions he can never hope for pardon or salvation.

3d Point. Examine your heart, and see if it is not the slave of this vice. Open your coffers, and look for it amidst your heaps of gold and silver. Oh my God! said a certain saint, I am neither tormented, nor anxious concerning the possessions of this world, for Thou knowest where I have laid up my treasures. Alas, is it just to damn one's self to amass thorns which will wound the heart and cause it to bleed? We brought nothing into the world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing with us beyond the grave.

Happy are those who content themselves with God; unhappy those whom God cannot satisfy. Silver and gold were the gods of the Gentiles, but the God of heaven alone shall be mine. It

is in Him that I hope, for Him that I work, in Him that I rest. Seek above all things his kingdom and his justice, and all things that are necessary shall be added to you.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Labor not to be rich; but set bounds to thy prudence." *Proverbs*, xxiii.

"Trust not in iniquity, and cover not robberies: if riches abound, set not your heart on them." *Psalm* lxi.

"He that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent." *Proverbs*, xxviii.

"For they that will become rich fall into temptation, and into the snares of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men in destruction and perdition." 1 *Timothy*, vi.

THURSDAY AFTER SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

Meditation.

ON POVERTY.

1st Point. That the word of God may bear fruit in our hearts, it is necessary to root up every thorn which the thirst for riches has produced therein, and cultivate and nourish a love of poverty.

A person who is poor in spirit, gives himself no trouble or anxiety concerning the goods and affairs of this life. A person poor in heart desires nothing. He contents himself with the necessaries of life, and is equally contented when they are wanting to him. A poor and contented man has but few wants; a rich and avaricious man is insatiable in his desires. A little suffices for necessity; all things, even abundance and superfluities, cannot satisfy avarice.

2d Point. A man is rich who possesses God; a man is poor who does not possess him. A man is happy who desires only God; a man is miserable who is not contented with God. All that the world values ends in nothingness. God cannot fill a heart which is closed and pre-occupied. When you desire nothing, you have all; when you have nothing, you possess all.

You say you have "much goods laid up for many years, and can take your rest, eat, drink, and make good cheer;" but the Son of God declares that "not being rich towards God, you are

poor" and miserable. A rich man is generally wanting in faith, hope, charity, sweetness, patience, mercy, peace, rest, consolation and humility. It is only the poor in spirit who can say: "I want for nothing, because God is sufficient for me."

3d Point. O my God, poverty is a rich inheritance. Thou art gracious and merciful to those who leave all else for thy love. It is this evangelical treasure which fills the soul with joy, and induces a man to sell all he has, that he may buy it. Who can fear to wander astray, walking in thy divine footsteps? Can any of thy creatures be born in greater poverty than Thou wast? can any die in greater poverty than Thou didst? Thou wast rich, and madest thyself poor; I am poor and desire to become rich! Thou didst possess all, and wast willing to want for all; Thou wast Master of all, and condescendedst to become the Servant of all. I have nothing, and sigh for abundance and luxuries! Am I deceiving myself, or is it Thou who art in error? It is I who am in error, because I esteem happy those whom Thou hast pronounced miserable, and miserable those whom Thou hast pronounced happy.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"According to thy ability be merciful. If thou have little, take care even so to bestow willingly a little. For thus thou storest up to thyself a good reward for the day of necessity." *Tobias*, iv.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." *St. Matt.* v.

"If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." *St. Matt.* xix.

"For we brought nothing into this world, and certainly we can carry nothing out." 1 *Timothy*, vi.

FRIDAY AFTER SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

Meditation.

ON TOO GREAT A SOLICITUDE ABOUT OUR HEALTH.

1st Point. Why are you so solicitous about your health? Why torment yourself on account of your body? Why so tender and careful of yourself? Oh, miserable life! why is so much pains taken to preserve it? What will it profit you to have length of days? Do you fear that the world will perish without

you? Is not life full enough of miseries to disgust you with it? Why, then, do you dread losing it? Is it just that a King should abase himself so much as to become the groom of his own stables? How can a spiritual soul occupy itself always in the service of the body, which in its meanness and instincts resembles a stable? Where is the slave who will not rejoice when his chains are broken? Ill health and sickness sunder the chains which hold your soul in bondage to the body, and yet you afflict yourself in order to strengthen it and increase them.

This is the reasoning of the Christian soul: Shall I be solicitous and troubled about being healed or not? If I am restored to health I lose much; if I die I gain much, for Jesus Christ is my life, and death my gain. Do you reason thus? Is this what you desire?

2D POINT. Sickness, to the sinful and unprepared, is a formidable and dreadful thing; to the generous and good, contemptible; to the Christian desirable, because it affords him an opportunity to suffer with Jesus Christ, show how much he loves Him, to sacrifice to Him his life, and approach Him in eternity, which is the end of all his desires. What is more difficult than to unite holiness with health; than to discover the feebleness of the soul in a body which is strong; to know its diseases in a body which is full of health; to suffer in a body which suffers nothing? It is for this that those saints who were robust and strong impaired their health by penance, and brought their bodies under spiritual subjection; but you would rather that your soul should languish with disease than your body! You think only of the care of your perishing body, and labor not for your immortal soul. You spare your health by an omission of those duties, and a relaxation of those rules, on which depends the glory of God, the edification of your brethren, and the good order of the community which you disturb by your singularities and scrupulousness in regard to it. God alone should be the sole aim and end of man; it is to Him that we ought to direct our thoughts, our desires, our designs and actions. And you, O delicate Christian, think of nothing but the preservation of your health! Are you not one of those of whom St. Paul speaks when he says there are "*many, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you with weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their body, and whose glory is their shame; who mind earthly things.*" Do you not make your body the object of your worship? you who think only how you may gratify its longings, and who scrupulously consider all that can

nourish it or strengthen it; you who are so delicate and fastidious about the preparation of your food; who so greatly fear to fatigue or incommode yourself; who fly from labor, dispense yourself from all austerity, and yield more to the guidance of physicians than to the maxims of the Gospel.

3d Point. Those who occupy themselves too anxiously with the care of their health, prove that they have but little confidence in Divine Providence; or that they doubt whether He is watchful of their necessities, and sustains by his merciful care, the body as well as the soul. God, it is true, desires to aid and strengthen us; but He does not wish us to attach ourselves too much to this life, or apply ourselves too exclusively to remedy those ills which He has permitted to visit us. The most enlightened physicians know not the cause or nature of your complaints unless God discovers it to them. They could not apply the proper remedies unless He directed them; the remedies would have no effect unless He blessed them; and He curses those who lean on flesh and blood, and have no confidence in Him. He permits physicians to deceive themselves, and prescribe medicines unsuitable to your disease. He always afflicts those with sickness who set too much value on health, and think only of preserving it.

Are you of this class of persons? Do you not bestow too tender and anxious a care on your health, and seek to preserve yourself from sickness, because you are afraid of bodily suffering? Are you not impatient in sickness? Do you suffer with submission? Are you resigned to life or death? Do you consider yourself a victim, whom Jesus Christ has placed here below to be immolated for his glory? Imitate Jesus Christ, who lived on earth, and was immolated by continual sufferings. Like an innocent lamb, He was led to death, uttering no word of complaint. Be like the Lamb of God. Suffer yourself to be deprived of all things without murmuring, allow yourself to be immolated; but say not a word, and account yourself happy in having a body that you can sacrifice, through suffering and death, to God.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh." *Galatians*, v.

"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the vices and concupiscences." *Ibid.*

"For if you live according to the flesh you shall die: but if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live." *Romans*, viii.

"They who are in the flesh, cannot please God." *Ibid.*

"Thus saith the Lord: Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm." *Jeremias*, xvii.

SATURDAY AFTER SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

Meditation.

ON THE HAPPINESS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

1st Point. The Holy Virgin is the good soil which received the Divine Word, and caused to germinate the celestial grain which has enriched the universe with the fruits she has produced and given to the world. It is earth as pure and unsullied as was that of Eden, when God himself planted therein the Tree of Life. "*Hail Mary, full of grace! the Lord is with thee! Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.*"

2d Point. The immaculate Virgin is happy because she has conceived in her body the Son of God; more happy, in having conceived Him in her mind by Faith; supremely happy, in having conceived Him in body and soul. She is doubly mother of the word, since she has given Him double life. Oh that I might give Him life in my soul! Oh that I might hold Him there forever! It is this that He prefers to his corporal life, since He suffered death that He might live in my soul. It is by this mystical birth that I shall become the brother, the sister, the mother, of Jesus Christ.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the paps that gave Thee suck." *Luke*, xi.

"Yea, rather blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it." *Ibid.*

"Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just: let the earth be opened and bud forth a Saviour." *Isaias*, xlv.

"Let the people, O God, confess to Thee: let all the people give praise to Thee: the earth hath yielded her fruit." *Psalm* lxvi.

"For the earth that drinketh in the rain which cometh often upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is tilled, receiveth the benediction of God." *Hebrews*, vi.

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

THE GOSPEL. *Luke*, xviii. 31–43.

"At that time Jesus took unto Him the twelve, and said to them: Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man. For He shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and scourged, and spit upon: and after they have scourged Him they will put Him to death, and the third day He shall rise again. And they understood none of these things; and this word was hid from them; and they understood not the things that were said. Now it came to pass, that, when he drew nigh to Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way-side, begging. And when he heard the multitude passing by, he asked what this meant. And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried: Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me. And they that went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace. But he cried out much more: Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus, standing, commanded him to be brought unto Him. And when he was come near, He asked him, saying: What wilt thou, that I do to thee? But he said: Lord, that I may see. And Jesus said to him: Receive thy sight; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he saw, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God."

Meditation.

ON THE GOSPEL.

1ST POINT. At this time Jesus speaks of his sorrows, and the world speaks only of its vain delights; Jesus discourses with his disciples on his passion, and the world will neither hear nor comprehend his meaning. The fruits of his passion constitute the felicity of the saints. Moses and Elias conversed of it with Him on Thaber. Christian souls, who love Him on earth, speak of the excess of his grief and ignominy with tender compassion and profound gratitude, but the wicked shrink with horror from the recital of his sorrows, and the example of his humiliations; they converse only of the excess of their transitory joys, their good cheer and debaucheries. Oh, sweet Jesus! there are but few who, at this sorrowful time, desire to follow Thee; but few who keep

Thee company in thy griefs. They let Thee go to Jerusalem to suffer, while they go to Babylon to engage in the pursuit of enjoyments. But I will follow Thee wherever Thou goest; I love better to weep with Thee than to rejoice with the world.

2D POINT. A blind man, hearing that Jesus was passing by, cried out with all his strength, and in all the earnestness of his heart, "*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!*" Oh, beautiful prayer of faith and humility, which appeals so powerfully to the heart of Christ, and moves Him with such tender pity that He calls the blind beggar to Him, and asks, "*What wilt thou that I do to thee?*" being resolved to grant him whatsoever he desired! Oh, infinite goodness of God! which condescends so sweetly to man's low estate as to ask him what he would have Him to do, as if He could refuse him nothing that he asked. It is thus that St. Peter addresses God: "*Lord, what wouldst Thou have me to do?*" But, alas! there are too many of whom God is obliged to ask: "*What wilt thou that I do to thee?*" There are but few who say, with the Apostle, "*Lord, what wouldst Thou have me to do?*"

3D POINT. You approach the holy table, and ere long, Jesus will pass from the hands of the priest into your heart. When He enters, say to Him, with all the faith and devotion which inspired the blind beggar by the way side, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me; Jesus, Son of Mary, have compassion on me! Is it not more glorious, more sweet, more tender, to call Him the Son of Mary than the Son of David? He will at once respond to such an appeal, and say: What wilt thou that I do to thee; for since thou hast interposed the name and influence of my immaculate mother I can refuse thee nothing: make known thy desires that I may grant them.

Lord, that I may see, that I may know Thee, and know myself; that I may know thy goodness, and my malice; that I may know thy perfections and my defects; that I may know Thou art all, and I am nothing! Lord, I am blind; I know not what I desire or need; I ask to see, to taste, to feel. Is it necessary for me that I should comprehend thy designs, relish thy word, and be sensible of consolation? Lord Jesus Thou knowest, and I ask of Thee, not to see, but to praise and love Thee; to become humble, meek and charitable, and be made according to thy own heart, that in all things I may be conformed to thy holy will. I seek not consolations, but grace to serve Thee with humility and faith. Finally, grant that, after death, I may behold thy face in peace, and love, praise, and glorify Thee through all eternity.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"I will go to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frank incense." *Canticles*, iv.

"And there were Moses and Elias, appearing in glory. And they spoke of his decease, which He should accomplish in Jerusalem." *St. Luke*, ix.

"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" *Acts*, ix.

"Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, and let not the strong man glory in his strength, and let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, for I am the Lord, that exercise mercy, and judgment, and justice in the earth." *Jeremias*, ix.

"It is just to be subject to God." 2 *Machabees*, ix.

MONDAY AFTER QUINQUAGESIMA.

Meditation.

ON HATRED OF THE WORLD.

1st Point. It is necessary to despise the world, it is necessary to hate the world; it is necessary, at all times and in all things, to fly from the world, especially in those things wherein it declares itself the enemy of God. It is necessary to despise the world because it is deceitful; its promises delude men with expectations which are never realized. Its pleasures are not genuine, are not solid, are not pure, are not enduring; they can neither content nor satisfy the mind, because they elude our grasp at the moment that we think we hold them securely. With what disgust they fill the soul! with what inquietude the mind! with what bitterness and remorse the conscience! Have you ever found repose in its service? How do the pleasures and good cheer of the wicked terminate? In the ashes of death and an eternal Lent, to which they are condemned in hell.

2d Point. It is necessary to hate the world, because it is the enemy of Jesus Christ, the slave and partisan of the devil, who is the tyrant of virtue, and the father, the master, and promoter of all evil. He who loves the world believes in the maxims of the world. He who is opposed to the gospel is a disbeliever in it. He is a Christian in name and infidel in heart. The devils believe there is a God, but they believe and tremble; but they do

not believe in a God, because they have not done and can never do his holy will. Worldlings, like those fallen spirits, believe there is a God, but do not believe in Him, since they refuse to obey his commandments; and are even worse than devils, because even they believe and tremble, says St. James; but worldlings believe and mock at Him. In a word, whoever is a friend of the world is the avowed enemy of Jesus Christ. It is necessary to fly from the world with mind, body and heart, if it is possible. Its company is dangerous, its maxims are detestable, its customs are pernicious, its examples scandalous, its assemblies of fashion infectious. Its partisans are proud and haughty, avaricious, treacherous, sensual and perfidious, and the enemies of God. The world is judged, it is condemned, it is excommunicated. It is, then, necessary to fly from its companionship, and not to frequent it. It is safer to be hated by the wicked than loved by them. If you are of the world, says the Divine oracle, you will die in your sins.

TUESDAY AFTER QUINQUAGESIMA.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. What reason have you for loving the world? Did it create you? Did it redeem you? Can it save you? Jesus says that "*He is not of this world*," and you say that you are of this world; you are not, then, a disciple of Jesus Christ. Did you not at your baptism renounce the world? You renounced it before you had reason, or the knowledge of free will, and now that you have both do you not love it? Surely you lead men to suppose, by your life, that you would have rejected baptism had it been in your power to do so.

2d Point. Jesus, my Saviour, the world has a multitude of followers who worship it, and Thou hast but a few servants who love Thee and faithfully attend Thee! Thou art faithful, and deceivest none, and yet thy creatures refuse thy service! What will I gain by serving the world? What recompense can I expect from it? Will it console me in the hour of death? Will it defend me after death? Alas, it will betray me! it will abandon me in my greatest necessities, and deliver me to the power of my enemies.

3d Point. The first virtue of a Christian, says St. Jerome, is to despise and be despised by the world. Say with him, I am not of this world, I have learned to despise instead of loving it. I love better to be humble and unknown, with Jesus, than to be great and honored in the eyes of the world. I love better to weep with Jesus, than to rejoice with the world. I love better to live in poverty and want all with Jesus, than to live in the midst of pleasures, and possess all, with the world.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Woe to the world because of scandals." *St. Matt.* xviii.

"I am not of this world." *St. John*, viii.

"Now is the judgment of the world." *St. John*, xii.

"I pray not for the world, but for them whom Thou hast given me." *St. John*, xvii.

"You are of this world, therefore I said to you, that you shall die in your sins." *St. John*, viii.

"Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the charity of the Father is not in him." 1 *John*, ii.

"The world passeth away, and the concupiscence thereof. But he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." *Ibid.*

EIGHTH OF DECEMBER.

FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Meditation.

ON THE GRACE OF HER CONCEPTION.

1st Point. Mary was predestined from all eternity to be the Mother of the Son of God, in order that she might co-operate with Him in the destruction of the empire of sin, and become the Queen of angels and of men. Her conception was itself a glorious mystery, a great grace, and the first effect of her predestination; and being preserved from the stain of original sin, she was so pure before she became the Mother of God, that it is impossible to conceive an idea of purity like hers. She could say with much greater reason than Isaias: "*The Lord hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother he hath been mindful of my name!*" If the Son of God had not loved her perfectly,

if He had refused to her a grace which He values as more precious than all others, He would have contracted some stain and some infamy, in being born of a sinful woman. Could He have permitted the devil to make himself master of his Mother, to profane his temple and violate his spouse? Since she was destined, with her divine Son, to destroy sin, and crush the serpent's head, she was exempt from the slavery and corruption of original sin, for the abolishment of which her Son came into the world. And she who was destined to be the Queen of angels did not become inferior in grace to them. As the first angels and first men were created in grace, their Queen was conceived without sin. Say, then, with the divine Spouse: "*Thou art all beautiful, my love, and there is no spot in thee.*" She was the *enclosed garden*, which the serpent could never enter, and the *sealed fountain*, which he never defiled.

2D POINT. Mary was happy in being conceived without sin, but more happy in never having committed sin. It is a great evil for us to have contracted original sin, but a greater evil still for us to have committed actual sin. Alas! we distress ourselves at having been born in original sin, and yet do we not live in sin? We wish to have been conceived in grace, and yet wish not to live in grace!

3D POINT. Mary never sinned, notwithstanding which she was the most afflicted of all creatures! You sin continually, and wish to suffer nothing. Mary was innocent, and was treated as though she had been guilty; you are guilty, and wish to be treated as though you were innocent! Is it proper or just to expect the Son of God to have a more tender regard for you than for his Holy Mother?

4TH POINT. The grace of Mary's conception is the origin of all others that enriched her, and the foundation of her dignity and greatness. There are certain graces in life which are the first causes of salvation, and on which salvation depends. If you co-operate therein, you will be saved; if you slight and neglect them, you will be damned; and because you do not know the precise one on which your eternal safety depends, it is necessary to co-operate faithfully in all, for fear that the one that you may despise should be that which would have secured your felicity.

5TH POINT. There are sins in life which are the origin and first cause of damnation, as the first false step on a steep hill side is the cause of a dangerous descent to the bottom to him who is so unfortunate to take it. You cannot exactly designate the sin by which your soul will be precipitated into hell; it is therefore ne-

cessary to avoid all alike, the least as well as the greatest, because the great depend on the little, and the little is the first cause of that which is great.

6TH POINT. There are active sins which may also be named as original; for instance, the sin of scandal which communicates itself to, and infects the nature of, others. Such are the sins of priests with regard to their people, princes to their subjects, parents to their children, masters to their servants; and generally those who lead an exemplary life with regard to those who lead a worldly life. Do you not give scandal by your life, your words, your actions? Is not your example pestilential and contagious to society?

7TH POINT. Oh holy mother of God! thou art beautiful and pure, and there is no spot in thee! I am satisfied of the utter imposibility to imagine a creature possessed of such immaculate purity as thine! Thou art inexpressibly happy in having lived with God as much as with thyself; we are miserable because we defer our salvation, and do not begin to live to God until old age, or until we are near death. We are afflicted at being conceived in sin against our will, and we take pleasure in voluntarily living in sin and dying in sin!

8TH POINT. Christian soul, live with God all your life as did the holy and immaculate Virgin. We were not born in grace, but it is our privilege to die in grace; and we cannot die in grace unless we live in grace. Oh, most pure and undefiled Virgin! although I am not immaculate like thee, let my life be without stain like thine; and as I have contracted the guilt of original sin, obtain for me the grace to avoid all actual sin, that I may recover by repentance the innocence I have lost, and receive after death a welcome from thy divine Son in these words: "*Thou art beautiful, my beloved, and there is no spot in thee.*" Oh, Mother of mercy! let thy happy privilege, thy exemption fron all sin and concupiscence, inspire thee with pity for our miseries; and, by thy spotless purity and abundant graces, obtain for us strength against all dangers, the deliverance from all our miseries, and the most powerful remedies of divine grace.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Thou art all fair, my love, and there is not a spot in thee." *Canticles*, iv.

"As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters." *Canticles*, ii.

"The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways." *Proverbs*, viii.

"The work is great; for a house is prepared not for man, but for God." 1 *Paralipomenon*, xxix.

"Holiness becometh thy habitation, O Lord, unto length of days." *Psalm* xcii.

"Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, and terrible as an army set in array? *Canticles*, vi.

SECOND OF FEBRUARY.

PURIFICATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Meditation.

ON THE VIRTUES SHE PRACTISED IN THE TEMPLE.

1st Point. Mary is the Mother of God, and she appears as the mother of a man! What Humility! Mary is pure as the sun, and she comes to the temple to be purified! What Purity! Mary is not subject to the law, and she submits to it voluntarily! What Obedience! Mary has one only Son, infinitely dear to her, and she sacrifices Him to God, by placing Him in the arms of the high-priest, and at the same time on those of the cross! What Charity!

Imitate these four virtues of the Holy Virgin; have, like her, an humble heart, a pure body, an obedient spirit, and liberal hands! Offer to God that which is most dear to you, sacrifice to his service and good pleasure your children and your possessions, your desires, and your fears. Give to Him, above all, your heart, that only and firstborn, which He asks of you, and commands you in the law to present to Him; give it to Him without reserve or division. You will not lose it in giving it to Him; on the contrary, you will deliver it from the captivity of the devil, render it free and happy, and procure for it those inestimable treasures which it can never find away from Him.

2d Point. Whither go you, Christian soul?

To the temple, with holy Simeon.

What are you going to do there?

Receive the divine child Jesus in my arms.

Who will give Him to you?

God the Father, and the Virgin Mother, by the hands of the priest.

How will you receive Him, and what will you do?

I will welcome Him with humble rapture into my heart; I will make Him rest in my bosom, and will offer Him to God for the remission of my sins, and in thanksgiving for the innumerable graces which He has bestowed on me.

What will you do after this?

I will return, singing, with the holy old man Simeon, this canticle of joy: "*Now dost Thou dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word, in peace; because my eyes have seen thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people: a light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.*"

3d Point. Your life will be peaceful, if you desire only Jesus! Your death will be peaceful, if you love only Jesus! You will inherit eternal life if you place yourself, like a little child, in the arms of the Mother of Jesus! Since she has presented the Chief and Head of your salvation to the Father, it is proper that she should also present the members; and since she offered the first of the predestined to Him, it is proper that all the predestined should be presented by her hands. Nothing is acceptable to the Father that is not presented by the hands of his divine Son; nothing can please the Son which is not presented by the hands of his immaculate Mother! All that the Son presents is agreeable to the Father; all that the Mother presents is agreeable to the Son. Behold how great an obligation you are under to love, honor, and serve the Holy Virgin!

4th Point. It is necessary to become her child, if you desire to be presented by her hands; and to be her child it is necessary to choose her for your Mother. It is essential that you should imitate her virtues; be humble, chaste, obedient, and charitable, as she was. Oh, Holy Virgin! oh, worthy of the exalted honor of being the Mother of God! can it be that thou dost wish to be the mother of sinners, but above all, such a sinner as I am? Yes, dear and blessed Lady! I am sure that this is thy desire, for I no longer delight in sin. For, didst thou not consent to become the Mother of God that thou mightest also become the mother of sinners? Canst thou hate those whom thy Son loves? Canst thou reject those whom thy Son has sought, and who with such goodness he received into his company?

Oh, holy Mother of God! I place my soul in thy hands; I pray thee to take care of it; all wicked and defiled as it is, it is the price of the blood of thy Son; it is for this that He gave his life. It is for its ransom that thou hast sacrificed thy Divine

Child, and delivered Him to death. Thou canst not despise that which has cost thee so dear, and which our compassionate and tender Jesus, thy dear Son, so dearly loved! If my soul is in thy hands, let every fear subside, and if thou wilt deign present it to God it will infallibly be saved; for all that thou presentest to Him is acceptable and agreeable to Him.

Oh, Jesus my Saviour! let me depart from this world in peace; after having seen Thee, what more do I wish to behold? After having received Thee into my heart, I have nothing more to desire. I am satisfied and contented, for Thou hast filled and supplied all the wants of my soul. Oh, my Lord, remember, I conjure Thee, that I have the honor of being *thy servant and the son of thy handmaid!* Canst Thou turn away from the child of thy Mother, in his sore need and distress? Canst Thou despise one who loves her, and whom she holds under her protection?

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"They carried Jesus to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord." *St. Luke*, ii.

"Take thy only-begotten son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and go into the land of vision; and there thou shalt offer him for a holocaust." *Genesis*, xxii.

"I also, in the simplicity of my heart, have joyfully offered all these things." 1 *Paralipomenon*, xxix.

"Now dost Thou dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word, in peace." *St. Luke*, ii.

"O Lord, for I am thy servant: I am thy servant and the son of thy handmaid." *Psalm*, cxv.

ASH-WEDNESDAY.

Meditation.

ON EXTERIOR PENANCE AND MORTIFICATION.

1st Point. There is nothing more united and less united than the soul and body. When one advances, the other recoils; when one rises, the other descends; when one is in health, the other is sick; when one is strong, the other is weak. It is necessary, then, in order to strengthen and give health to the soul, to bring the body under subjection, and weaken its evil propensities by penance and mortification.

I am not a man if I obey my passions; I am not a Christian if I do not combat with and overcome my passions; I am not a true penitent if I do not mortify my passions. Since my body is polluted by sin, it ought to be purified by pain; and since it has part in the pleasures of the soul, it ought to glory in sharing its sorrows.

2d Point. How do I know that my sins are forgiven? How do I know that the pain which my offences merit is remitted? How do I know that God will not punish me in my body? How do I know that He will not chastise me in my soul? How do I know that He will not regard me with coldness, and permit me to fall into some grievous sin? How do I know that I shall be able to rise after falling therein?

3d Point. If I spare myself, God will not spare me; if I love myself, God will not love me; if I hate myself, God will not hate me; if I punish myself, God will not punish me; if I excuse nothing in myself, God will pardon all; if I excuse all things in myself, God will pardon nothing; if I am indulgent to myself, God will be severe; if I am austere and harsh with myself, God will be merciful.

Oh, Christian soul! make your body a living and dying victim; mortify your passions, your senses, and your desires; mortify yourself at all times, and in all places; mortify yourself with zeal, mortify yourself with discretion.

THURSDAY AFTER ASH-WEDNESDAY.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. Make a free offering of your body to God, and He will impart to you his Spirit. Be watchful and careful in the discipline of your exterior, and He will guard and provide for the interior. Do all that you can, and that which you cannot accomplish He will do for you. Walk while you can, and when your strength fails you He will bear you in his arms. Fast with Jesus, that you may eat the Pasch with Him.

2d Point. Fasting is salutary for both soul and body; it is an efficacious remedy for their diseases. Nothing is impossible to him who has faith; nothing is difficult to him who loves; all is possible to him who reposes his trust in God. Fast if you can,

and persuade yourself that you can do more than you imagine yourself capable of. Fasting is blessed by God, consecrated by his Son, and observed by all the faithful. God imparts strength to those who fast, and deprives of strength those who do not. Good cheer and luxurious ease are destructive to the health and life of all men; fasting and abstinence are safe remedies which restore the health and prolong the lives of all who practise them. He who shall have lost his health and strength for Jesus Christ, shall recover all that he thinks he has lost. He who desires to preserve his body and health, to the prejudice of the interests of Jesus Christ, shall lose all that he hopes to gain.

3d Point. I will therefore chastise my body as the Apostles did, for fear of being found among the reprobates. I desire with all my heart to follow the example and imitate the life of Jesus Christ, that I may be of the number of the predestined. I will mortify my body, in order to remedy the maladies of my soul; I will deprive it of the power of revolting by fasting, which will impare its strength. I will mortify my senses, that I may live a spiritual life. I wish to die with Jesus that I may rise with Jesus. I wish for stripes and wounds, that I may become a true member of his thorn-crowned head; and if I have not courage to inflict them on myself, I will at least suffer with thankfulness whatever afflictions God may see fit, in his divine providence, to send me.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary one to another." *Galatians*, v.

"And they that are Christ's have crucified their flesh, with its vices and concupiscences." *Ibid.*

"If you live according to the flesh you shall die." *Romans*, viii.

"For the wisdom of the flesh is death; but the wisdom of the spirit is life and peace." *Ibid.*

"Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." *Jeremias*, xvii.

FRIDAY AFTER ASH-WEDNESDAY.

Meditation.

ON THE EXCELLENCE OF MORTIFICATION.

1st Point. What is mortification? It is a death of love which destroys the criminal life, detaches the mind from the senses, separates the soul from the body, and makes it live in the spirit.

It is a sacrifice of love, in which the Holy Ghost is the priest, the body is the victim, the heart is the altar, pain the knife, love the fire, glory the fruit.

2d Point. What is mortification? It is a martyrdom of love, less bloody than a martyrdom of faith, but longer and more wearisome, more free, and (in one sense) more voluntary.

What is mortification? It is a continuation of the sacrifice of the passion of Jesus, which supplies all that is wanting in his sufferings; which transforms our bodies into members of his, and animates them with his divine spirit; which makes us participate in his sorrows, merit his graces, and finally exalts us to the throne of his glory.

3d Point. Why is it that I mortify myself so little? Alas! it is because I do not love Jesus Christ, and am not one of his members animated by his spirit; it is because I lead a sensual and carnal life, and despise and shrink from his sufferings; it is that I am the slave of my body and seek only the pleasures of the flesh, and relish not those of the spirit, being worldly, sensual, voluptuous, and the enemy of God. Oh, in order that I may die the death of the just, I will henceforth live the life of the just; I will from this moment become a victim of love, that I may die in the arms of divine love.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"I beseech you, brethren, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing unto God." *Romans*, xii.

"I die daily." 1 *Corinthians*, xv.

"With Christ I am nailed to the cross." *Galatians*, ii.

"Who now rejoice in my sufferings, and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh for his body, which is the Church." *Colossians*, i.

"Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God, by Jesus Christ our Lord." *Romans*, vii.

SATURDAY AFTER ASH-WEDNESDAY.

Meditation.

ON THE OBLIGATIONS WE ARE UNDER TO MEDITATE ON THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST.

1st Point. The Son of God is well pleased when we reflect on the sorrows of his bitter Passion, and we owe Him this consolation, since it was for us that He suffered and yielded himself a willing victim to the justice of God, bearing in himself the punishment due for our sins. It was for this that He descended from the throne of his splendor at the right hand of the Father, and passed his life on earth in poverty, humiliation, and misery, "*Blotting out*," says St. Paul, "*the handwriting of the decree that was against us, fastening it to his cross.*" We should, then, suffer with patience and joy, for the love of Him, all pain, all distress, all injuries which may overtake us. But He only asks us to come hither, and at the foot of the cross think of the love we owe Him, and the excessive griefs He has suffered for our salvation. Is there any thing more just? Notwithstanding which, we occupy ourselves but little with such reflections. When they are presented to our minds, do we not think of them with lightness and frivolity, and without interest, attention, or grief? The grandeurs, the vanities and pleasures of the world engross our thoughts, while the sorrows and pangs of Jesus are forgotten! Can any thing be more unjust?

2d Point. There is nothing sweeter or more consoling than to meditate on the passion of Jesus, because it reveals to us the excess of his tender and compassionate love, and inspires us with a lively and strong hope that God will pardon our sins, and be merciful to our infirmities. For the Son of God has satisfied the justice of God the Father; He has transferred to us the treasures of his merits, and we should glory more in the price He has given for us than in all the blessings, graces, and joys which we hope to obtain from his infinite goodness.

These are sweet reflections, and ought to fill our souls with consolation. What joy and pleasure ought we not to derive from the fountain of all grace, which is ever open and free for the refreshment of souls!

I have committed many and grievous sins; my conscience is terrified, but why should I be cast down or troubled when I remember the wounds of my Saviour, and that it was for my sins

that he received them! "There are no wounds, however mortal," says St. Bernard, "which may not be healed by the death of Jesus."

3d Point. The remembrance of the passion of our Lord is very useful to us in our spiritual warfare, for it renders us victorious over our enemies, who are the world, the flesh, and the devil. The devil tempts us by despair or presumption: despair arises from ignorance of the mercy of God, who delivered his only Son to death for the salvation of sinners, and accepted his sufferings in payment of their debt. He revealed his justice in the rigorous treatment which He inflicted on his only, his most holy and innocent Son, who, wearing only the likeness of a sinner, and being clothed in the shadow of our transgressions, was obliged to submit to the weight of his anger and suffer the penalty of our guilt.

The passion of Jesus enables us to obtain the victory over the world, which tempts us only by love and pleasure, fear and grief; for who is there that can love pleasure when they behold the Saviour of the world consumed by suffering? who can fear grief and pain, when they reflect that Jesus preferred them to all the splendor and felicity of Paradise?

The flesh is our most dangerous enemy, it is that which tempts us both by love and fear; but the passion of Jesus inspires us with horror for all that it loves, and with love for all that it hates and fears. When I see the body of my Saviour covered with wounds, I am constrained to cry out, with one of the saints, in accents of tender compunction, *Behold mine, without wounds!*

Oh, Saviour of my soul! is it surprising that I, who meditate so seldom on thy sacred passion, who shrink with horror from the contemplation of thy wondrous sufferings, who turn my eyes away from thy wounds, should yield to temptations when they assail me? But, from henceforth, I will establish my habitation on Calvary. There do I wish to live, there do I wish to die. Not on Thabor will I begin my Lent, but on this hill of grief! Here I will say, "it is good, O Lord, for me to be in this place!" Oh, spectacle full of profit and consolation, to behold a God expiring on a cross for the love of sinners!

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Think diligently upon Him that endureth such opposition from sinners against himself, that you be not wearied, fainting in your minds." *Hebrews*, xii.

"O, all ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow." *Lamentations*, i.

"For I judged not myself to know any thing among you, but Jesus Christ and Him crucified." 1 *Corinthians*, ii.

"Forget not the kindness of thy surety, for He hath given his life for thee." *Eccles.* xxix.

"Christ, therefore, having suffered in the flesh, be you also armed with the same thought." 1 *Peter*, iv.

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.

THE GOSPEL. *Matt.* iv. 1–11.

"At that time, Jesus was led by the spirit into the desert, to be tempted by the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards hungry. And the tempter, coming, said to Him: If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. Who answered and said: It is written: Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil took Him into the holy city, and set Him upon a pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him: If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down, for it is written: He hath given his angels charge over Thee; and in their hands shall they bear thee up, lest perhaps Thou dash thy feet against a stone. Jesus said to him: It is written again: Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again the devil took Him up into a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, and said to Him: All these will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and adore me. Then Jesus said to him: Begone, Satan; for it is written: The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil left Him; and, behold, angels came and ministered to Him."

Meditation.

ON THE CAUSES OF TEMPTATION.

1ST. POINT. Why did our Lord suffer himself to be tempted? It was in order to vanquish our enemy, to teach us how to combat, to inspire us with courage, to animate us by his example, to humiliate the devil, who triumphed over Adam, to repair the sin of our first parents, and to raise them from their fallen condition, by giving their children power to triumph over the devil.

2D POINT. Why am I tempted? It is because you are proud,

because you do not guard your senses, especially your eyes and ears, because you are under the dominion of bad habits, which hold correspondence with the devil; it is, perhaps, because you are not in the order, or state, in which God desires you to be, and have not followed your vocation; it is that your heart is attached to creatures, or that you are not sufficiently occupied; it is that you are a man, a sinful man and a Christian, and that you desire only happiness and consolation. For a man, being free, is not always determined to do good; but the sinner, being a slave, is under the dominion of him who has conquered. The Christian, being a soldier, should never relax his warfare, or slumber at his post. If the righteous wish to be crowned, they must first be proved by temptation.

3d Point. Why has the devil tempted me? Because he hates the image of God, which you bear in you; because he is envious of man, and wishes him to be in his own place; because he seeks to make you his slave and the companion of his pains. It is for this end that he desires to enter into your heart, which is the throne of God, to be adored therein; strives to profane his temple and sanctuary; wishes to drive Jesus Christ from his kingdom, which is in you; wishes to crucify Him anew, in your soul, and renew the ignominies of his passion. Do you not assist him in his malicious designs? Do you not satisfy his ambitious schemes? You do this as often as you yield assent to his temptations.

4th Point. Why does God suffer me to be tempted? For His glory and your good. He wishes to know if you truly love Him; He wishes you to know yourself, and to make you sensible of your infirmities, and constrain you to have recourse to Him; He wishes to prove your virtue, to hold you in dependence on Him, to prepare you for combat, detach you from creatures, and render you worthy of eternal life.

Oh, Jesus, Saviour of my soul! since Thou hast been tempted I am no longer astonished that I also suffer temptations. It is good for me to know Thee and know myself. Temptation is necessary and salutary for me, because it renders me humble, and prevents me from being presumptuous. Let me be tempted, then, my God, and prove me to see if there is any iniquity in me. Oh, no, my God, do not tempt me, I know my miseries too well! Deliver me speedily from temptation, at least strengthen me against its assaults, and give me courage to vanquish it. Satan aims at Thee as well as at thy servant. Defend thyself and thy interests, therefore, in me, against thy enemy and mine.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"God tempted Abraham." *Genesis*, xxii.

"Fear not; for God is come to prove you." *Exodus*, xx.

"Ananias, why hath Satan tempted thy heart?" *Acts*, v.

"God hath tried them and found them worthy of himself." *Wisdom*, iii.

"As gold in the furnace He hath proved them." *Ibid.*

FIRST MONDAY IN LENT.

Meditation.

THE PASSION OF OUR LORD IN GENERAL.

1st Point. Jesus is the true Son of God. He is the holiest of men, the greatest of kings, the faithfulest of friends. He never injures any, but does good to all. And all the world have conspired against Him, all the world have persecuted Him. As He suffered *for* all men, so all men have made Him suffer. Men and women of all ranks have contributed to his passion. Jews, Gentiles, priests, kings, soldiers and people, men and women, and his own disciples even, have all put a hand to his cross, and added to his miseries. Are you not of the number? are you not the most cruel of his persecutors?

2d Point. Jesus suffered every description of evil in his soul and body, mind and heart, memory and imagination, his honor and goods, his parents and friends; in his senses and in all his limbs! He was a *man of sorrows*, and I wish to be devoted to sensual pleasures! He suffered from all the world, and I wish to suffer from none! He suffered all imaginable evils, and I wish to suffer none! He suffered the worst of evils, and I wish for those only which are light! He suffered voluntarily, I suffer only what I cannot avoid!

3d Point. Oh, my sweet Jesus! thy holy passion fills me with grief and confusion. It is a great source of grief to me to behold Thee suffering for me! It is a source of great confusion to me not to be able to suffer for Thee. Give me grace, at least, to suffer ordinary evils with patience, and by thy divine aid, render me capable of supporting, from day to day, those more weighty and grievous afflictions which may visit me, and through which, as a fiery ordeal, I must pass.

FIRST TUESDAY OF LENT.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. Jesus is the victim of all time and of all men; the victim of sinners and of the just. As He has loaded himself with all our crimes, He has crowned himself with all our sufferings! As there are none of his creatures whom He has not loved, there are none for whom He has not suffered. But He suffered principally for myself, as He bestows more graces on me than on others, which are the fruits of his sufferings. He has ever held me in remembrance, and I never think of Him! I do not love Him, or desire to suffer for his sake.

2d Point. Why did Jesus die? Why did He desire the unspeakable anguish and misery that He endured? Alas! He died to return to me the life which I lost through sin; He rendered himself miserable to secure for me an eternal felicity; He delivered himself to the power of his enemies to deliver me from mine! He did not question the judgment of Pilate, He did not work miracles as He might have done, to deliver himself from their hands. He was crucified throughout his life. His heart was transfixed to the cross with his body. The greatest of all his sufferings was in not suffering; it was his chief desire to be baptized in his own blood, to drain the chalice of his passion, and die.

Oh, sweetest Jesus! Thou wert not displeased with thy enemies for doing that which Thou didst so much desire, and which enabled Thee to suffer without measure. It was only their sins and malice which diminished thy satisfaction, and added to thy griefs. The torments which they inflicted on Thee cannot be surpassed in cruelty, nor could they make Thee suffer more. They loaded Thee with opprobriums and ignominy, and treated Thee as the most miserable of all slaves, and the most abandoned of all men. Couldst Thou have suffered more than Thou didst suffer, or die in more cruel agonies than Thou didst?

3d Point. And I avoid all suffering and mortification, and would even escape death. I wish to live surrounded by delights and enjoyments, when, if justice were awarded me, I should at this moment be suffering all the pains of hell. Where is it that I do not find examples of thy goodness and tender mercy? Where is it that I do not discover my own malice and presumption? Where is it that my ingratitude is not apparent?

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead corporally." *Colossians*, ii.

"And Christ died for all." 2 *Corinthians*, v.

"Who gave himself for our sins, that He might deliver us." *Galatians*, i.

"And I have a baptism, wherewith I am to be baptized: and how I am straitened until it is accomplished?" *St. Luke*, xii.

"From the sole of his foot to the top of his head, there is no soundness therein: wounds and bruises and swelling sores: they are not bound up, nor dressed, nor fomented with oil." *Isaias*, i.

FIRST WEDNESDAY IN LENT.

Meditation.

JESUS IN THE GARDEN OF OLIVES.

1st Point. *Jesus is sorrowful even unto death.* What is the cause of his sadness? Is it the foreknowledge of all that He is to suffer? Alas, no! it is the sight of my sins, my ingratitude, my misery! I laugh at those things which should cause me to weep! I take pleasure in that which ought to render me miserable. He has compassion on me, and I have none on Him.

2d Point. He is seized with fear to prove that He is man, that He is human and infirm like myself. He has divested himself of his strength, and clothed himself with my weakness; He has given me his courage, and taken my timidity; He trembles to assure me, fears to encourage me, falls to raise me! Oh, what goodness! what charity! Where can we find a physician who is willing to give his health and strength to his patients in exchange for their maladies and feebleness? Oh! *surely, He hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows.*

3d Point. Pleasure and grief constitute the causes of the sins of men; desire and fear their passions. Jesus has vanquished these two enemies, and imparted to us his strength that we also may vanquish them. He has abstained from all pleasure, suffered all griefs, renounced all the desires of nature, triumphed over all fears; sweat blood and water from all his veins, and contended even unto death.

FIRST THURSDAY IN LENT.

Meditation.

ON THE BLOODY SWEAT.

1st Point. Consider, my soul, how rude was this first shock of his sacred passion to our divine Saviour! Behold Him kneeling, bathed in his own blood, which oozes from every pore. It is the fear of his approaching torments; it is the horror inspired by your crimes and the desire for your salvation which excites this intolerable combat in his sacred heart. He has concentrated in himself all the iniquities of the human race, and conceived for them so great a sorrow, that He must have expired had not his life been preserved by a miracle. He wrought miracles that He might suffer, but none to exempt himself from suffering. And I am impatient, because God does not constantly interpose miracles to exempt me from suffering and dying.

2d Point. Oh, Saviour of my soul! this first combat of thine has been a bloody and fearful one! What pains it cost Thee to dissipate, by the violence of thy sorrow, the multitude of our crimes, which Thou hadst before thine eyes! I was with Judas in the Garden of Gethsemane to seize Thee! I was in thy sacred heart to afflict Thee! My sins were in the world before my birth; they strengthened the arms of the Jews to strike and buffet Thee; and delivered Thee to thy enemies, who tormented Thee with malicious ingenuity, and afterwards crucified Thee!

3d Point. Oh, divine Master! Thou hast given to the world most noble and beautiful examples, but no one desires to imitate them; Thou hast taught us the most perfect lessons, but no one desires to learn them; Thou goest first to the conflict, but none follow Thee. Thy disciples have basely abandoned Thee; they sleep while Thou dost watch; they enjoy repose while Thou art engaged in a bitter warfare; they afflict instead of consoling Thee; they betray instead of delivering Thee!

Oh, what confusion overwhelms me! Jesus overcomes all the alarms and infirmities of nature, clothed as He was with the weakness of man, and I yield to them, although I am sustained by the strength of God; He goes generously to the conflict with my timidity, and I, who am endowed with his courage, fly!

Oh precious blood, which watered and bathed this ungrateful earth, warm my cold heart, water my arid soul, strengthen my

spirit, and raise up my fallen courage! I wish to enter the combat with a firm resolution to overcome and resist the rebellious movements of nature, even unto the shedding of blood. I will, by the grace and in the strength of God, triumph over my flesh, and subject my spirit to divine charity. I will maintain the warfare, until, like Thee, I sweat blood and water. Like Thee will I suffer, and drink the chalice of thy bitterness unto death.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"The chalice which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" *St. John*, xviii.

"He began to grow sorrowful and to be sad. Then He saith to them: My soul is sorrowful even unto death: stay you here, and watch with me." *St. Matt.* xxvi.

"And his sweat became as drops of blood, trickling down upon the ground." *St. Luke*, xxii.

"Surely He hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows." *Isaias*, liii.

FIRST FRIDAY IN LENT.

Meditation.

THE PRAYER OF JESUS IN THE GARDEN.

1st Point. Jesus, in his sadness, withdraws himself from his disciples, for the purpose of praying to God his Father to remove from his lips the bitter cup of his passion. He prays with reverence, prostrating himself before Him. He prays with perseverance for several hours. He prays with resignation to the Divine will of God his Father. He prays, and is not favorably heard, that we may learn to pray and be resigned.

2d Point. Oh, sweet and tender Jesus! Thou didst not desire to receive a consoling answer to thy prayers, that we might prevail in ours. Thou didst not obtain favor for thyself, but secured it for me! I am heard favorably when I pray, but He was not! He could have commanded legions of angels to come to his assistance; but He did not invoke their presence, because He wished to die and shed his blood for our salvation! What charity! what compassion! what mercy!

3d Point. Pray in your afflictions. Pray that God may remove them from you; pray with humility; pray with constancy

and perseverance; pray with resignation; pray with conformity to the will of God. Weary not in prayer, and murmur not if you are not heard.

Propose to yourself all those subjects of fear and sadness which distress you, and present them to Jesus, saying: My Lord and my Saviour, behold this chalice of confusion which Thou hast presented to me to drink; remove it far from my lips, for it is extremely bitter; nevertheless, not my will but thine be done. Father of mercies! behold a chalice of grief prepared for me! Father of the poor, behold a chalice of poverty, presented to me by thy Divine providence! Must I drain it? Wilt Thou not in pity remove it? I pray Thee, O my God, to dispense me from this bitter draught; yet not my will, but thine be done.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"And going a little further He fell on his face, praying, and saying: My Father, if it is possible, let this chalice pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou *wilt*."—*St. Matt.* xxvi.

"My Father, if this chalice may not pass away, but I must drink it, thy will be done."—*Ibid.*

"Abba, Father, all things are possible to Thee; take away this chalice from me: but not what I will, but what Thou wilt."—*St. Mark*, xiv.

"O my God, I shall cry by day, and Thou wilt not hear: and by night, and it shall not be reputed as folly in me."—*Psalm* xxi.

FIRST SATURDAY IN LENT.

Meditation.

THE DOLORS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

1st Point. *O all ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow.* Mary's sorrows are measured by her love. Those who love much, suffer in proportion to their love. They who have but little love, know but little suffering. The Holy Virgin loved her Divine Son with a tender affection, which surpassed that of all other mothers for theirs, because He was the most amiable of the children of men; and she loved Him by nature, knowledge, and grace.

He was her only Son, whom she shared with no father. She had conceived Him by the operation of the Holy Ghost, who is

the spirit of Divine love, and who united them together by an indissoluble chain of love and sympathy. This Son resembled her in holiness, purity, and perfection. She had received infinite graces from Him, and thus with her natural love was united a love of gratitude, a love of sympathy, and a love of charity. She loved Him as God and as man; as her Father and her Son; as her Creator and Redeemer. There never existed any creature so amiable as Jesus; there never has been known love comparable to Mary's, which was better, more tender and perfect, than the love of all mothers who have ever lived.

2d Point. Her grief was measured and augmented by the prophetic knowledge she had of all that He was to suffer. Not only had the Prophets foretold his passion and death, but He, also, had discoursed with her, and instructed her concerning them. It was all—the ignominy, the buffeting, the scourging, the bloody sweat, the spitting, the cross, the spear—apparent to her from the hour of his birth. She meditated on the griefs which awaited her Divine Son, and examined in her thoughts all the circumstances attendant thereon. Consider the anguish of this most afflicted and tender mother, when her Son separated himself from her, and bade her a last adieu! As the Son and the mother had but one and the same heart, she felt all that He endured. The wounds which were inflicted on his body, were imprinted on her sacred heart. What a spectacle! A Son expiring on a cross, and a mother standing by, the mute and agonized witness of his sufferings! *O all ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow.*

3d Point. Admire the virtues of the most Holy Virgin. What resignation to the will of God does she not exhibit, amidst so many afflictions and sorrows! What humility, to follow her Son to the place of suffering and ignominy, and wish to be recognized by all the world as his Mother! What courage, to behold Him expiring without evincing the least sign of impatience; without allowing herself to be bowed down by her grief, but to remain standing by his cross! What charity, to consent to the death of a child so dear to her soul, to satisfy his will and desire! What love for men, to immolate her Son on this bloody altar, for their salvation!

Oh, Mother of grace and mercy! since thou hast loved me so much as to deliver thy only Son to the painful and ignominious death of the cross, I will love and serve thee all the days of my life; I will offer thee only praise and benedictions all my life; I will, by thy most holy example, make a continual sacrifice to God

of all that I hold most dear to me; I will endeavor to imitate thy virtues, of which I will make a chaplet, to crown my heart continually with, in thy honor.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his Mother." *St. John*, xix.

"And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed." *St. Luke*, ii.

"For my sighs are many and my heart is sorrowful." *Lamentations*, ii. Thau.

"Woman, behold thy Son. After that He saith to the disciple: Behold thy Mother." *St. John*, xix.

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.

THE GOSPEL. *St. Matt.* xvii. 1–9.

"AT that time, Jesus taketh unto him Peter and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart. And He was transfigured before them. And his face did shine as the sun: and his garments became white as snow. And, behold, there appeared to them Moses, and Elias talking with him. Then Peter, answering, said to Jesus: Lord, it is good for us to be here: if Thou wilt, let us here make three tabernacles, one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias. And as he was yet speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them. And lo! a voice out of the cloud saying: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him. And the disciples, hearing, fell upon their face, and were very much afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said to them: Arise, and be not afraid. And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one, but only Jesus. And as they came down from the mountain Jesus charged them, saying: Tell the vision to no man, till the Son of Man be risen from the dead."

Meditation.

ON THE TRANSFIGURATION.

1ST POINT. Jesus is transfigured on Thabor, on Calvary, and on our altars. The first is a transfiguration of glory; the second of ignominy; the third of love. To be transfigured with Jesus on

Thabor, we must be transfigured with Him on Calvary. If you suffer with Him you shall reign with Him; if you take part in his ignominies, you shall also have part in his glory.

2D POINT. The third transfiguration is that of the body of Jesus on our altars. His vestments there are as white as snow, and his face a thousand times brighter than the sun; but it is covered with a cloud or veil, for what human eye could support the ineffable splendor of his countenance? It is here that Moses and Elias, that is, the will and understanding, converse together with Him of all the extremes of love and grief that He suffered for us in Jerusalem, since this divine mystery represents the sacrifice of his bitter passion and death, and was instituted by Him as a commemoration thereof.

3D POINT. The fourth transfiguration is that which takes place in holy communion; wherein a man is transformed into Jesus Christ. He is no longer a man but a God; no longer a sinner, but a child of God. The Eternal Father regards him with complacency and salutes him, as He did his divine Son on Thabor; "*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*" He who was before a sinner, being clothed in the real presence of the body and divinity of Jesus, is thereby rendered holy and just! They are one body, and one spirit; they are two united in one flesh. Let your lives, then, correspond with the great privilege you enjoy, of being transformed into Jesus. Let your thoughts be the thoughts of Jesus, your words be the words of Jesus; that God the Father, beholding you, may say: "*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*"

4TH POINT. The fifth transfiguration is that of a soul in prayer. His heart burns with a celestial flame. Moses and Elias, the law and the prophets, converse with him of the passion of Jesus. The powers of his soul, filled with the sweet rest of contemplation, cry out with extasy, It is good, O Lord, for us to be here; here let us remain always. I have had great difficulty in ascending the height, I have not spared myself in the exercise of mortification, and I have, through many toils, prepared my spirit by meditation; but the labor, the sweat, and the pains are forgotten in my present happiness, and in the extreme repose that I enjoy.

5TH POINT. The last transfiguration is that of happy souls in heaven. "*When we behold God,*" says St. John, "*we shall be like Him.*" When, after the sufferings of this life, we shall have been received into the glorious company of those who reign on this beautiful Thabor, our eternal and joyful song shall be: "*Oh, it is good for us to be here!*" There is nothing left me to wish for. I have found an everlasting rest. I have received a glorious

recompense for my poor labors. But, Christian soul, while you are waiting to sing this beautiful canticle in heaven, be contented, wherever God may place you on earth. In whatever state you may be, *it is good for you to be therein*, since God has placed you there; whether it be in poverty, sickness, humiliations, or confusion, Jesus is with you, and will remain with you, if you do his holy will.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"But we all, beholding the glory of the Lord with open face, are transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 *Corinthians*, iii.

"We are the sons of God. And if sons, heirs also: heirs indeed of God, and joint-heirs with CHRIST: yet so if we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him." *Romans*, viii.

"If so be you have tasted that the Lord is sweet." 1 *Peter*, ii.

"Thou art beautiful, O my love, sweet and comely as Jerusalem." *Canticles*, vi.

"But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit." 1 *Corinthians*, vi.

"How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord." *Psalm* lxxxiii.

SECOND MONDAY IN LENT.

Meditation.

ON THE TREASON OF JUDAS.

1ST POINT. Judas was an avaricious, ungrateful, deceitful, and impious man. He was instigated by avarice to sell his divine Master. An avaricious man is ready to sell his soul and his God for silver. What ingratitude, to betray and deliver to his enemies, Him from whom he had received so many blessings! What treachery to betray Him with a kiss! What impiety and sacrilege, to sell, for vile and filthy lucre, the most holy and sacred being on earth!

2D POINT. An inordinate love of money caused Judas the eternal loss of his soul. This passion stifled his faith, hope, and charity. It obscured his spirit and debauched his heart. It destroyed all those sentiments of piety which had been imparted to him by the presence of Jesus, by his conversation, examples, miracles, and graces. Who will not tremble when they remember

that an Apostle became an apostate? Who will not fear when they behold a pillar of the Church overthrown and dashed to pieces? Who will dare assure themselves of salvation, when they reflect that a man chosen by God himself was transformed into a demon and precipitated into hell?

Presume not on your graces; Judas had received more than you have. Presume not on your inspirations; Judas was more enlightened than you. Presume not on your miracles; Judas wrought more than you have done. Presume not on your strength; Judas possessed a greater and more sensible protection than you do. Presume not on your election; Judas was chosen by God himself. Presume not on the signs of your predestination; those of Judas were more apparent than yours.

3d Point. Judas was damned. Why? Because he allowed himself to be possessed of an infernal passion; because he did not destroy it in its birth; because he did not generously resist its first assaults; because in the beginning he was guilty of little frauds and light infidelities, which became great because he was envious of the spiritual blessings of his fellow-creatures; because he concealed his avarice with a veil of pretended charity; because he did not conceive a true repentance for his sins, but abandoned himself to despair.

Oh, it is a dangerous thing to abandon one's self to an evil passion! Oh, how *little sins* should make us tremble! Oh, these light infidelities are formidable enemies, and throw us into great disorder! Oh, there are many Judases in the world, who every day betray Jesus with a kiss, which they give Him at the holy table. How often have you betrayed Him? How many times have you not sold Him to the devil for a little pleasure, a vile interest, an imaginary glory! Do not despair as he did, but reject the offered price; return to his sweet society, and attach yourself more strongly to your divine Master, who would, in his tender compassion, even have given his grace to Judas, if he had acknowledged his sin and implored his forgiveness.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Friend, whereto art thou come?" *St. Matt.* xxvi.

"Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" *St. Luke*, xxii.

"He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me." *St. Matt.* xxvi.

"There is not a more wicked thing than to love money: for such a one setteth even his own soul to sale." *Eccles.* x.

"The eye of the covetous man is insatiable in his portion of iniquity: he will not be satisfied till he consume his own soul." *Ecclesiasticus*, xiv.

"For they that will become rich, fall into temptation, and into the snares of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men in destruction and perdition." 1 *Timothy*, vi.

SECOND TUESDAY IN LENT.

Meditation.

ON THE COURAGE OF JESUS AFTER HIS PRAYER IN THE GARDEN.

1st Point. Jesus, desolate and full of extreme anguish, arose from prayer to seek some kind friend who would sympathize in his sorrows, and administer consolation to his afflicted spirit, but there was none to whom He could address himself. He approached his disciples, but they were sleeping: He then returned, and again had recourse to prayer, but received no response from his eternal Father. Restless in his agony, He came once more to his disciples and said, "*What! could ye not watch one hour with me? Watch ye and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*" Is it not to you, Christian soul, that these complaints and reproaches are addressed? Do you not sleep when you should watch and pray? Are you not afraid that you will fall into temptation?

2d Point. Jesus prays the third time, and is not heard. Then, falling into extreme agony, God his Father sent an angel to strengthen and console him. Learn from this to despise the consolations of men, and have recourse to God in all your afflictions; to pray to Him in fears and doubts, and implore his succor and protection in dangers. Prayer is the best remedy for a soul that is sick, a sweet consolation for the afflicted, strength for the weak, courage for the timid, light for the blind, a refuge for sinners, the buckler of faith, the life, nourishment, treasure and salvation of all Christians. Why is it, then, that you pray so little? Why is it that you abandon prayer, or pray with so little fervor and so many distractions?

3d Point. Jesus, strengthened by prayer, came to his disciples, and said to them: "*Sleep on now, and take your rest; behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us go: behold, he is at hand that will*

betray me." Whence obtained He this courage? Through prayer. Imitate your Master; accompany your King; follow your Captain. When it is necessary to resist a temptation, or vanquish a repugnance of nature, say to your base and sleepy heart: Rise, and let us go to death or to prison, go to be reconciled with those whom we have offended, and assure those who have injured us of forgiveness; rise, ye who sleep, and Jesus Christ will enlighten you, strengthen you, defend you, render you victorious over your enemies, and crown you with glory after death.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"In the day of my trouble I sought God, with my hands lifted up to Him in the night: and I was not deceived." *Psalm* lxxxvi.

"Behold, there is no help for me in myself, and my familiar friends also are departed from me." *Job*, vi.

"Simon, sleepest thou? Couldst thou not watch one hour." *Mark*, xiv.

"Behold, he is at hand that will betray me." *Matt.* xxvi.

SECOND WEDNESDAY IN LENT.

Meditation.

JESUS IS TAKEN BY HIS ENEMIES.

1st Point. Jesus, addressing the soldiers, said: *Whom seek ye?* They replied, *Jesus of Nazareth!* There are some who, like the Jews, only seek Jesus to take Him, outrage and crucify Him! There are others who seek Him only to love and serve Him, but the number is small. Whom do you seek in your designs, your devotions, and prayers? Is it Jesus or yourself? Is it his honor and glory, or your own? Oh, if you seek God with a pure heart, your happiness and contentment will abound until the measure of your joy is filled to overflowing! All of your troubles, anxieties, and doubts arise from your seeking *yourself* instead of the will and glory of your heavenly Father.

I have sought Him, but I have not found Him. Why is this? It is because you do not seek Him at the proper time or place. You seek Him in the garden of delights, and He is only to be found in the field of conflicts and sorrows, where He sweats great drops of blood and water. You seek Him in palaces, and He is only to be found in a stable, in the temple, or on the cross!

You seek Him after He has stood knocking for a long time at the door of your heart, but it is too late; He grew weary of waiting; his locks were heavy with the dews of night, and He has gone away. You seek Him coldly and with indifference. He is strong and swift as a giant: it is necessary to run that you may overtake Him.

2d Point. Jesus said to the soldiers, *I am He*, and *they went backwards and fell to the ground.* What a Captain! who maketh his enemies fall to the earth by a single word! What will be his power when He comes to judge them, if He is so powerful when they come to judge Him? Oh, how terrible it will be to the wicked at the hour of death to hear Him say, *I am He* whom you have betrayed, outraged, and crucified! But how full of sweetness and consolation He will be to the just, who, having lived piously, are received by Him after death with these welcome words: Fear not, *I am He* who redeemed you; *I am He* whom you have served, honored, and obeyed!

Fear not, He will say to you in your temptations, *I am He* who has proved you, visited you, and sent this or that affliction to try you, and I will deliver you.

3d Point. The just fall as well as the wicked, but in a different manner. The just fall into venial sins, the wicked into mortal sins. The just fall through surprise and frailty, and the wicked through premeditation and malice. The just fall forward on their faces as the Apostles did on Mount Thabor, the wicked fall backwards like the Jews in Gethsemane. The just know wherein they fall, and quickly raise themselves; but the wicked know not when they fall, and fear to rise, or think it too difficult and troublesome a task to do so.

Oh my soul, what do you seek? Is it Jesus of Nazareth? Behold your divine Master in the hands of the soldiers, who bind Him with thongs, buffet Him, and treat Him with violence! Do not abandon Him in his desolation as the other disciples did, but remain with Him even unto the end. They said, at the Last Supper, that they would never abandon Him, but go with Him to prison and to death, notwithstanding which, they basely forsook Him when He was seized by his enemies. Do you not often act thus? What pious and tender protestations have you not made to Him in holy communion, and yet how frequently have you not betrayed and abandoned Him in the hour of temptation?

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Whom seek ye?" *St. John*, xviii.

"You shall seek me, and you shall die in your sins." *St. John*, viii.

"I sought him, and found him not." *Canticles*, iii.

"As soon, therefore, as he said: *I am He:* they went backward, and fell to the ground." *St. John*, xviii.

SECOND THURSDAY IN LENT.

Meditation.

ON THE BLOW THAT JESUS RECEIVED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE HIGH PRIEST.

1st Point. What greater insult can be offered to a noble or royal personage than to strike them? Jesus is a person of infinite dignity, and He received a blow from the hand of a poor insolent slave, who had come with the Jews into the garden of Olives, and, being wounded by one of the disciples, was cured by his Divine power. He received it in a great assemblage, composed of the priests and princes of the people. He received it in the manner of a correction, as if He had committed some grievous fault, and been wanting in proper respect to the high priest. He received it with extreme patience. He asked why He was struck, lest by his silence He should give them cause to believe that He consented to their accusations, and acknowledged himself guilty.

2d Point. Jesus desired to be struck: 1st. To repair the insult offered to God by the first man who disobeyed his word, and in a manner contradicted Him. 2d. To repair, by his ignominies, the shame and confusion of our nature, which was transformed by the sin of Adam into a degraded and sensual one, as He repaired our infirmities by his weakness, and delivered us from the sting of death by dying. 3d. To afford us an admirable example of sweetness and patience, by suffering so great an outrage without uttering a threat against his enemies, or drawing vengeance on them as He could have done.

3d Point. You have enemies. What injury have they done you? Is it comparable to that which was inflicted on the Son of God? Are you of more account, more innocent and holy than He is? How many sins have you committed? As often as you have sinned, so often have you struck Jesus. And do you presume, after this, to complain of the ill-treatment you receive from men who are your equals and superiors? Do you desire to be

revenged on your enemies? to return evil for evil? Do you dare to murmur against the providence of God, who has given you a blow on the cheek by the hand of the wicked, in punishment for the outrages you have offered Him?

Oh Lord, I will say nothing, but keep silence, believing that it is Thou who hast struck me by the hands of my enemies. Thou dost neither desire their sin, nor co-operate therein; but it is thy will that I should suffer the pain that I have merited by mine. It is not Satan who has caused me to suffer this loss; it is not men who have outraged me; it is the hand of God that has chastised me. Oh, I will submissively bear the weight of his anger, because my offences deserve it. I will be silent and not complain, because Thou, O Lord, hast afflicted and humiliated me. I turn to Thee my other cheek, and beseech Thee to spare me not in this life, that I may receive pardon in the life to come.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"I was dumb, and was humbled, and kept silence from good things: and my sorrow was renewed." *Psalm* xxxviii.

"I was dumb, and I opened not my mouth, because Thou hast done it." *Ibid.*

"The hand of the Lord hath touched me." *Job*, xix.

"He shall give his cheek to him that striketh him: he shall be filled with reproaches." *Lamentations*, iii.

"My enemies have chased me, and caught me like a bird, without cause." *Ibid.*

SECOND FRIDAY IN LENT.

Meditation.

ON THE OUTRAGES THAT OUR LORD RECEIVED IN THE HOUSE OF CAIAPHAS.

1st Point. Consider the outrages and insults our Lord submitted to from his enemies, in the house of Caiaphas. He was spit upon; He was blindfolded; He was treated as a false prophet; He was declared a blasphemer, and judged worthy of death.

You do the same whenever you offend God. You repeat these outrages whenever you offend or scandalize your neighbor. Jesus Christ declares that He suffers whatever evil is done to the least of his disciples, as the head feels whatever injury is inflicted on the smallest member of the body. It is, then, striking Jesus Christ

to strike your neighbor; it is hating Jesus Christ to hate your neighbor; it is scoffing at Jesus Christ to scoff at your neighbor.

2d Point. Suffer, like Jesus, the most injurious words that may be said to you. Suffer with Jesus all outrages that are offered to you. Are you greater than He is? Are you more holy and innocent than He is? Jesus suffered, and you would escape suffering! Jesus did not take revenge on his enemies, and you seek revenge on yours!

3d Point. Oh, Jesus my Saviour! do I not deserve to be despised and maltreated by creatures, since I have had the insolence to despise and maltreat Thee? I deservedly merit their blows, since I have so often raised my hand against Thee! I hear Thee declared guilty, and I wish to be thought innocent! I behold Thee unjustly condemned to death, and I shrink, with pain, from the thought of dying! Oh, my sweet Saviour, I wish to die for Thee, since Thou hast given thy life for me. I will bear with patience the injurious words and actions of those who hate me, since Thou hast suffered the most base and malicious treatment for me.

Oh, dear Jesus, silence me when I complain of the malice of those who desire to harm me; restrain me when angry impulses urge me to speak. When I have offended or injured my neighbor say to me: Why do you strike me? why do you dishonor me? I hold as done to myself that which is done to the least of my members.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"One of the servants standing by gave Jesus a blow." *St. John*, xviii.

"Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted Him; and others struck his face with the palms of their hands." *St. Matt.* xxvi.

"Why strikest thou me?" *St. John*, xviii.

"He shall sit solitary, and hold his peace: because he hath taken it up upon himself." *Lamentations*, iii.

SECOND SATURDAY IN LENT.

Meditation.

ON THE SEVEN STATIONS OF OUR LORD'S PASSION.

FIRST STATION.

Oh, Jesus my Saviour, Thou didst sweat blood and water in the Garden of Olives, at the sight of my sins and thy ap-

proaching torments, and strip thyself of thy strength to assume our infirmities! I adore Thee, all bathed as Thou art in thy sacred blood. I thank thy most tender and sacred heart for being thus afflicted for me; I detest all sins that have caused Thee so much sadness and bitter anguish, and I am resolved rather to die than offend Thee again. Give me grace to conceive, like Thee, so poignant a sorrow for my sins, that I may resist, even unto death, the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil; and that, in all things, I may conform to the will of thy Father, howsoever my nature may be opposed to it.

SECOND STATION.

Oh, Jesus my Lord, Thou hast been struck and maltreated in the house of Caiaphas. I thank and adore Thee for having suffered these injuries, and this confusion for me. Alas! how often have I not struck and outraged Thee in the person of my neighbor! I most humbly beseech thy pardon, and am resolved, from henceforth, to bear all injuries with patience, and offend Thee no more in this way, by thought, judgment, word, will or action.

THIRD STATION.

Oh, Jesus my King! Herod and the Jews despised Thee when they preferred a thief, a seditious man and a murderer, to Thee. Vouchsafe to grant me thy forgiveness for having so often preferred the suggestions of the devil, and the love of miserable creatures, to thyself. Thou shalt ever reign the sovereign of my heart, and I am resolved to lose my life, my possessions and reputation, rather than offend or dishonor Thee. Forbid, dear Lord, that I should ever again prefer the enemy of souls to Thee, and grant me grace to fly from every occasion of sin that would cause me to treat Thee with contempt, and trample under foot the fruits of thy sacred passion.

FOURTH STATION.

Oh Jesus! the most chaste and pure of all men, whose innocent flesh was torn with scourges in the house of Pilate, in order to expiate the criminal pleasures we take in ours, I know it is for me Thou hast suffered these cruel torments. I am filled with sorrow when I behold those wounds, which have been inflicted on Thee by the indulgence of my sensuality. I implore Thee by the pangs of thy bitter passion to sanctify me, both soul and body, wash and cleanse me of every impurity in thy precious blood, and

never permit me again to be soiled by sin, or renew thy ignominies by my guilt.

FIFTH STATION.

Oh Jesus, the greatest of kings! Thou hast been crowned with thorns, and borne on thy shoulders the royal marks of thy principality, and I acknowledge and adore Thee as my Lord and sovereign. And since there is no part of thy body that is not covered with wounds, I desire to take no pleasure in mine, but to live always in a state of mortification and grief, in order to be a living member and true subject of thine.

SIXTH STATION.

Oh, Jesus my Saviour! for me Thou wast fastened to the cross, whereon Thou didst shed every drop of thy precious blood to deliver me from the power of the devil, whose slave I was. I thank Thee for the incomparable love Thou hast borne me, and for the innumerable sufferings Thou hast endured. With tender awe I salute thy wounded hands and feet. I adore thy sacred heart, which was opened for the love of me, and I am resolved sooner to die than to crucify Thee again by mortal sin.

SEVENTH STATION.

Oh Jesus, my life and my hope! who didst die for me, and was abandoned in thy last hour, that I may not be abandoned in mine! Oh, Lamb without blemish, who wast immolated for the salvation of men! Oh victim of love, who wast consumed in a funereal pile of grief! Oh Holy of holies! Oh King of kings! What can I do to express my gratitude for such infinite goodness? I can only die for Him who died for me.

I believe that Thou art indeed my Saviour: I should despair, if I were to doubt it for a moment. As Thou hast given thy life for me I will humbly hope Thou wilt forgive all my sins, and admit me after death into thy glorious presence. I detest my crimes, the cause of thy passion and death. I will, from this moment, suffer all things with patience, that Thou mayst never die in my heart, since such a death would be more sensibly felt by Thee, and be more ignominious than that of the cross. I beseech Thee to pardon all who have offended me. I offer myself to thy holy mother as her child, and desire, with all my heart, to imitate her virtues, and die in her arms. Into thy hands I commend my spirit, and beseech Thee, by the bitter abandonment Thou didst

suffer on the cross, to assist me at the hour of my death and receive my soul in peace, that I may behold Thee, praise and bless Thee, through all eternity. Amen.*

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

THE GOSPEL. *St. Luke*, xi. 14–28.

"AT that time, Jesus was casting out a devil, and the same was dumb. And when He had cast out the devil, the dumb spoke, and the multitude were in admiration at it. But some of them said: He casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils. And others, tempting, asked of Him a sign of heaven. But He, seeing their thoughts, said to them: Every kingdom divided against itself shall be brought to desolation, and house upon house shall fall. And if Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because you say that through Beelzebub I cast out devils. Now, if I cast out devils by Beelzebub; by whom do your children cast the mout? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I, by the finger of God, cast out devils; doubtless the kingdom of God is come upon you. When a strong man armed keepeth his court, those things are in peace which he possesseth. But if a stronger than he come upon him, and overcome him, he will take away all his armor wherein he trusted, and will distribute his spoils. He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through places without water, seeking rest; and not finding, he said: I will return into my house, whence I came out. And when he is come, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then he goeth and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and entering in, they dwell there. And the last state of that man becometh worse than the first. And it came to pass, as he spoke these things, a certain woman from the crowd lifting up her voice said to Him: Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the breasts that gave Thee suck. But He said: Yea, rather blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it."

* This devotion can be recited every Friday during the year, and every day during the holy sacrifice of mass, also before confession and communion, but above all, in sickness. Pause after each station, and make with all the heart the acts just read.

Meditation.

ON RELAPSES INTO SIN.

1st Point. The oftener a sin is pardoned, the less excusable it becomes. As sins increase in number, so do they increase in malice. The second fall is dangerous: old wounds are incurable. Sins pass into habit, and from being habitual become necessary, after which they grow more frequent and heinous; then habit becomes stronger; grace more feeble; co-operation more difficult; the spirit more incapable of seeing; the will more infirm; the passions more rebellious; devils more powerful, and their power more tyranical.

What ingratitude, to offend God, after having received so many blessings! What contempt, to abandon Him after He has so often pardoned and received us! What treachery, to betray Him after having made so many promises! What malice, to outrage and crucify Him in your heart, after He has bestowed so many graces on you!

2d Point. Is it thus that you mock God? Is it thus that you despise his love, laugh at his patience, and abuse his goodness, presume on his mercy, make war with his sweetness, and waste his graces? Is it thus that you trample under foot the blood of Jesus Christ, and render his passion fruitless, stifle his Spirit, drive Him from your heart, and prefer the service of the devil to his?

After abundance comes poverty; after rain, dry weather; after the heat of summer, the ice of winter; after day, night; after consolation, affliction; after grace, chastisement; after love, contempt; after patience, anger; after insults and injuries, vengeance!

3d Point. Oh, my God, my Father, and my King! how can I presume to appear before Thee after so many treasons and infidelities, after so much contempt and ingratitude? My sins have, in a manner, changed my nature. Those which, formerly, were my weaknesses, are now a species of contempt, ingratitude and malice. Those that were formerly but the involuntary result of my evil passions, are now impenitence and hardness of heart. Those that were pardonable faults, are now crimes without excuse, and second falls without remedy.

The number of my sins is infinite; the weight of them insupportable, and their malice without excuse. Oh my God, I am re-

solved to forsake my evil habits, and the proximate occasions of sin; I will frequent the sacraments, and spend the rest of my life in penance! Oh my God, deprive me of life if I do not desire to be converted. Take me from the world, if I wish not to break the ties that bind me to it. Bestow no more graces on me, if I am so miserable as to abuse them. I ask only grace to weep for my sins, and do penance for them as long as I live.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"It is impossible* for those, who were once enlightened, have tasted also the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, have moreover tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, and are fallen away; to be renewed again by penance." *Hebrews*, vi.

"For if I build up again the things which I have destroyed, I make myself a transgressor." *Galatians*, ii.

"Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee." *St. John*, v.

"And the last state of that man becometh worse than the first." *St. Luke*, xi.

THIRD MONDAY IN LENT.

Meditation.

ON THE FALL OF ST. PETER.

1st Point. St. Peter denied his Divine Master, who had preferred him to the other Apostles, and appointed him chief bishop of his Church. He denied Him, after having made the most solemn protestations of love and fidelity. He denied Him, as his God and Master, in these words: "*I know not the man.*" He denied Him thrice. He denied Him with curses and imprecations. Behold the progress of evil! Behold how from slight faults one may fall into great and dreadful sins. Be compassionate towards this Apostle, while you are astonished at his fall, and seek the causes thereof.

2d Point. St. Peter fell because the love that he bore our Lord was lukewarm, and he followed Him afar off. A soul that is lukewarm does not take long to fall into great sins, for lukewarmness is a mixture of charity and concupiscence, grace and nature, devotion and coldness, which, like tepid water, partly cold

* That is to say, *difficult.*

and partly warm, cannot remain together without one or the other of its contrary qualities being destroyed. Concupiscence, in a measure, increases and charity diminishes. That which does not advance goes backwards. Besides which, the soul must have consolation, and cannot live without it; and that which is lukewarm, not being of heaven, it is compelled to seek it on earth, and of earthly things, and having no fervor, its venial sins lead quickly to those that are mortal. Added to this, these infidelities cause God to withdraw many of his graces, and the devil overcomes, with ease, an opponent so feeble and languishing. Is not this your state? Is this not the origin of your fall?

3d Point. St. Peter fell because he depended too much on his own strength. He did not know how necessary was the assistance of Divine grace to him; he did not understand his own weakness; he was filled with pride and presumption; he said, in his fervor, that nothing could move him, and even seemed to exalt himself over the other Apostles when he declared, that if all of them should abandon Jesus, yet he would never be wanting in fidelity to Him. He was so possessed with a good opinion of himself that, when his Divine Master told him that he would deny Him thrice, he did not believe Him; he declared that he would not, as if the Son of God could deceive himself. Oh, it is truly a dangerous thing to presume on our own strength, and trust only to our good resolutions. Is not this the cause of your fall? Do you not trust too much your heart and mind, your passions and weaknesses? Do you have frequent recourse to God? Do you pray to Him continually to guide and defend you?

4th Point. St. Peter fell because he threw himself rashly into the occasions of sin. He went into the house of Caiaphas, not to defend his Master, but to see all that should happen, and hear all that was said. He fought among the soldiers, and was arrayed against them. He was, apparently, intrepid, until the voice of a servant frightened him; that of another made him tremble; that of a soldier overthrew him, and made him deny his Master, with curses and imprecations.

Fly from the companionship of the wicked, unless you desire to become like them. What safeguard have you to preserve your chastity among the lewd and immodest? How can you remain sober in the society of drunkards, or humble with those who are haughty? You must surely resemble those with whom you associate; if not, you will soon become like them. You have grace to withdraw from them, but no promise of its continuing with you, if you remain with companions who are evil.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Be mindful, therefore, from whence thou art fallen: and do penance, and do the first works. Or else I come to thee, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou do penance." *Apocalypse*, ii.

"Therefore, let him that thinketh himself to stand, take heed lest he fall." 1 *Corinthians*, x.

"Blessed is the man who hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the chair of pestilence." *Psalm* i.

THIRD TUESDAY IN LENT.

Meditation.

ON THE REPENTANCE OF ST. PETER, AND THE DESPAIR OF JUDAS ISCARIOT.

1st Point. Judas betrayed his Divine Master, and Peter denied him. Judas, in despair, destroyed his own life; and Peter was converted. From whence comes this difference? Is it because Jesus looked at Peter? But He *spoke* to Judas; He warned him of his crime; He threatened him with terrible chastisements; He treated him as a friend, and assailed his heart with all the inspirations and charms of Divine love. Notwithstanding these facts, St. Peter was converted, and Judas despaired. Oh, judgments of God, terrible is the effect of your visitation on men! Oh, malice of the human heart! Oh, admirable results of the mercy and justice of God!

2d Point. Judas was lost because he did not desire to be saved. He had powerful graces before he sinned, he had the grace of repentance after he had sinned, but these graces were of no avail, because he abused them; resisted them, and was hardened in evil; because he had communicated unworthily, and was too much attached to the things of the world; because he sinned through malice, knowing the sanctity of Him whom he betrayed, and through ingratitude, delivering up to death Him from whom he had received so many graces. Oh, it is a perilous thing to abandon one's self to evil passions, to resist the grace of God and sin with knowledge!

3d Point. St. Peter was raised because he fell through fear and weakness. He did not renounce his Master in his heart, although

he denied Him with his lips. His apostasy was criminal, but excusable, as it was caused by terror, surprise, and unexpected events. He always loved his Divine Master, but fear triumphed over love. It was his first fault. The dangers which threatened him, of being seized and delivered into the hands of the infuriated Jews, prevented his reflecting on his crime, hearing the cock that crowed, or remembering the prediction of Jesus Christ. As soon as he was conscious of his fault he did penance, and did not, like Judas, despair.

THIRD WEDNESDAY IN LENT.

Meditation.

ON THE CAUSE OF THE CONVERSION OF ST. PETER.

1st Point. St. Peter was restored to grace, because our dear Jesus turned his Divine countenance towards him, and looked him in the face; called to his recollection the prediction He had uttered; opened his eyes to discern his fault, and touched his heart to weep and do penance. The look that Jesus cast on him was an arrow of divine love, which pierced his soul, and drew from his eyes fountains of tears. It was a ray of light and grace, which showed to him the love, tenderness and preference, that his Lord had borne for him; the charitable counsel He had given him; the blessings he had received from Him, and the solemn protestations he had made of never abandoning Him; then a full sense of his ingratitude, his infidelity, treachery and perfidy, broke up the depths of his repentant heart, and he wept bitterly.

2d Point. Alas! St. Peter denied his Lord and Master on only one occasion, and never ceased weeping for his offence during his life. How often have you not betrayed Him? How often have you not renounced Him through fear, human respect, passion, malice, and coldness, knowing all the time what you were doing? How often has He not spoken to you through his priests, and revealed to you the enormity of your guilt? And, notwithstanding all, you neither weep nor do penance. He casts a look of tender compassion on you, but instead of weeping bitterly for your sins, you return to his enemies, where you deny Him, strike, outrage, and spit upon Him more cruelly than the Jews!

3d Point. Oh, ye heavens! be astonished at this ingratitude and perfidy! Oh, who will give to my eyes fountains of tears, to weep day and night for my sins and unfaithfulness! Oh, sweet

Jesus! cast on me a single look of thy mercy, it is all that I need to convert me. I desire to do penance all the rest of my life. It is the effect of thy grace. Ah, do not permit me to abuse it as I have hitherto done.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"And the maid, therefore, that was portress, saith to Peter: Art thou not also one of this man's disciples? He saith: I am not." *St. John*, xviii.

"Whom when a certain servant maid had seen sitting at the light, and had earnestly looked upon him, she said: This man was also with Him. But he denied Him, saying: Woman, I know him not. And after a little while, another seeing him, said: Thou art also one of them. But Peter said: Oh man, I am not. And about the space of one hour after, another man affirmed, saying: Of a truth, this man also was with him: for he also is a Galilean. And Peter said: Man, I know not what thou sayest." *St. Luke*, xxii.

"I say to thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day till thou thrice deniest that thou knowest me." *Ibid.*

"And the Lord, turning, looked on Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said: Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly." *Ibid.*

"My eyes have sent forth springs of water: because they have not kept thy law." *Psalm* cxviii.

THIRD THURSDAY IN LENT.

Meditation.

JESUS IS ACCUSED BEFORE PILATE.

1st Point. Of what do you complain? You are innocent and have been calumniated. Was not the Son of God calumniated? He was accused of being a seditious man, who had only preached doctrines of peace and love to his enemies! He was accused of inciting the people to resist paying tribute, who had paid it to Pilate and Cæsar, and who had taught obedience to the laws in all his counsels. He was accused of assuming the qualities of a king, who had fled from the people when they wished to crown Him. Pilate declared Him innocent! Why, then, was He cruci-

fied? Because He was Jesus! because He was the Saviour of his people, and had assumed the burden and penalty of our guilt! In this behold the cause of his death.

Jesus is innocent, and appeared guilty; I am guilty, and wish to appear innocent! Jesus never sinned, and bore the pain of our sins; but I, who am a sinner, wish to avoid bearing the pain of mine! I am ashamed to appear criminal before men, but fear not to appear so before God. I do much that is worthy of condemnation, yet cannot endure the slightest blame. What injustice and arrogance to be wicked, and aspire to those honors which are only due to virtue! If you are guilty, why do you complain? If you are innocent, why do you grieve? Do you not consider it a great honor to be treated as the Son of God was?

2d Point. If you are a good man, you *cannot* avoid the condemnation of the world. They will present you bound, as they did Jesus, before the tribunal of their injustice. They will institute proceedings against you, and declare that you are unworthy to live among honest men. What will you do? Compare the judgments of men with those of Christ; the tribunal of Pilate with that of Jesus. He is the truth, whom this wicked ruler and judge did not wish to know. If the truth deliver you, you shall be free indeed. Be satisfied with the testimony of your own conscience with God. It is better to be betrayed by the wicked than loved by them; to be despised by the world than honored by it. Do you desire to please those who are displeasing to God?

3d Point. My soul, draw near to this tribunal of iniquity. Behold a God judged by a man! A God standing before a man who remains seated! A God, who is judge of the living and the dead, examined and condemned by the most wicked of his creatures! What hast Thou done, O innocent Lamb, that Thou art bound, and dragged through the city? Permit me, sweet Lord, to answer for Thee. Thou hast created the heavens and the earth; Thou hast made the lame to walk, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, the dead to live, and hast gone about doing good to all men; delivering those who were possessed of devils, and making heaven the reward of the good, and hell the punishment of the wicked. Oh Jesus, what hast Thou done to be so maltreated by men? What hast Thou done to me that I should dare offend and insult Thee?

Oh, my people! what have I done to displease you? What have I not done to gain your hearts and give you eternal joys? What ought you not to do for me? What have you not done against me?

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?" *Romans*, xiv.

"But with me it is a very small thing to be judged by you, or by human judgment: but neither do I judge my own self." 1 *Corinthians*, iv.

"For I am not conscious to myself of any thing: yet I am not hereby justified: but He that judgeth me is the Lord." *Ibid.*

"O God, be not Thou silent in my praise: for the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful man is opened against me. They have spoken against me with deceitful tongues; and they have compassed me about with words of hatred; and have fought against me without cause." *Psalm* cviii.

"Instead of making me a return of love, they detracted me: but I gave myself to prayer. And they repaid me evil for good, and hatred for my love." *Ibid.*

THIRD FRIDAY IN LENT.

Meditation.

ON THE CONTEMPT OF HEROD FOR JESUS, AND THE SILENCE OF JESUS BEFORE HEROD.

1st Point. Herod desired to see Jesus, and Jesus would not look at him; Herod questioned Jesus, and Jesus would not answer him; Herod demanded miracles of Jesus, and Jesus would not perform them; Herod despised Jesus, and Jesus cared not for his hatred. It is thus that the wisdom of God passes for folly in the eyes of the world, and the so-called wisdom of the world is but foolishness in the eyes of God.

2d Point. Jesus does not speak to the proud; He does not manifest himself to the haughty; He replies not to the adulterer; He bestows not his grace on the ungrateful. He, at last, despises those who despise Him. After having often spoken, He is silent. Being often driven away, He goes and returns no more. He conceals himself after having sought in vain.

3d Point. Oh Lord, my God! thy silence is a terrible thing! It is dangerous to resist thy inspirations and despise thy word. Wilt Thou be pleased to speak often to me? How frequently have I not heard thy voice, and left undone what Thou hast commanded! How often have I not, like Herod, caused the death of

thy precursor, and slaughtered thy harbingers in my heart; stifled thy inspirations, rejected and despised thy graces! I hear thy word, and obey it not; I read pious and holy lessons, and do not profit by them. Alas, I have reason to fear that Thou wilt withdraw thy graces from me, and speak to me no more.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"And Herod, seeing Jesus, was very glad; for he was desirous of a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things of Him: and he hoped to see some miracle wrought by Him. And he questioned Him with many words. But He answered him nothing." *St. Luke*, xxiii.

"For the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God stronger than men." 1 *Corinthians*, i.

"There is a time to keep silence, and a time to speak." *Ecclesiastes*, iii.

THIRD SATURDAY IN LENT.

Meditation.

JESUS CONFESSES THAT HE IS A KING.

1st Point. *Art Thou a king?* asked Pilate. Jesus answered. *Thou sayest that I am a king. For this was I born, and for this came I into the world; that I should give testimony to the truth.* But he adds: *My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would certainly strive that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now my kingdom is not from hence.* Jesus is the King of the universe, but He came not into the world to exercise the functions of an earthly monarch. He came to serve, obey, live in misery, and die in shame. My soul, is your King within? Is this his kingdom? Do you wish to take part in his sufferings and ignominies?

2d Point. The kingdom of God is not of this proud, ambitious, rich, and sensual world. His kingdom is within us; He reigns over us through the obedience that we show his commandments; He reigns through peace in our hearts, and by the submission we render to his divine Providence; He reigns over our spirits by faith, our hearts by charity, our will by hope, our passions by mortification, and our bodies by the cross; He reigns in this life by grace, in the other by glory. Of which kingdom are you? That of Herod, or that of Jesus?

3d Point. The kingdom of Jesus is not of this world; for his kingdom is the truth, and that of the world is vanity. If the kingdom of Jesus is not of this world, it follows that his disciples are not of it. You are not a disciple of Jesus if you are possessed with the spirit of the world, if you love its grandeur, if you seek its perishable treasures and its fleeting enjoyments; if you live as worldlings live, and follow the wicked maxims and customs thereof. Happy is he who can say with truth, *my kingdom is not of this world.* I am in the world, but not of it, neither do I wish for an abiding-place in it. Happy is he who, at the hour of his death, can say with Jesus, *I am going to my Father.*

I came into the world to love and serve God, work for his honor and glory, and keep his commandments. My mission is ended. I have accomplished the work He has given me to do. I leave with joy a miserable world, where I have known only suffering, to return to my Father, who will give me a recompense for my labors in the eternal enjoyment of his presence.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"The kings of the earth stood up, and the princes met together, against the Lord, and against his Christ." *Psalm* ii.

"For I am appointed king by him over Sion his holy mountain, preaching his commandment." *Ibid.*

"My kingdom is not of this world." *St. John*, xviii.

"You are of this world: I am not of this world." *St. John*, viii.

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

The Gospel. *St. John*, vi. 1–15.

"At that time, Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is that of Tiberias: and a great multitude followed Him; because they saw the miracles which He did on them that were diseased. Jesus therefore went up into a mountain; and there He sat with his disciples. Now the pasch, the festival day of the Jews, was near at hand. When Jesus, therefore, had lifted up his eyes, and seen that a very great multitude cometh to Him, He said to Philip: Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this He said to try him: for He himself knew what He would do. Philip answered Him: Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little. One of his disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, saith to him:

There is a boy here that hath five barley loaves and two fishes; but what are these among so many? Then Jesus said: Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. The men, therefore, sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves: and when He had given thanks, He distributed to them that were sat down; in like manner also of the fishes, as much as they would. And when they were filled, He said to his disciples: Gather up the fragments that remain, lest they be lost. They gathered up, therefore, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above to them that had eaten. Now these men, when they had seen what a miracle Jesus had done, said: This is of a truth the prophet that is to come into the world. Jesus, therefore, when He knew that they would come and take Him by force, and make Him a king, fled again into the mountain himself alone."

Meditation.

ON ALMSGIVING.

1st Point. Jesus teaches us, by his example, to nourish the poor and attend to their necessities; from which we may draw the following considerations:

The rich depend on the poor, and the poor on the rich; the rich take care of the poor, and the poor of the rich; the rich give corporal nourishment to the poor, and the poor give them spiritual. The poor depend on the rich in time, and the rich on the poor in eternity. Without the assistance of the rich the poor would die corporally; without the prayers and blessings of the poor the rich would die spiritually. The rich are the judges of the poor on earth; the poor shall be their judges in heaven. Why, then, do you despise the poor? Why treat them with harshness? Why do you not endeavor to deserve their blessings? Why do you not assist them?

2d Point. Graces and chastisements are in the hands of the poor. When they demand mercy for him who aids them, God grants their prayers; when they demand justice against those who send them empty away, God also grants it. A rich man is in danger of losing his soul when he has not the prayers and benedictions of the poor. Those who have not the poor for their advocate shall not find grace with their judge. He who has the poor to plead for him need not fear, but rejoice.

3d Point. Be merciful, then, to the poor, since they are human

and miserable like yourself. Their misery is only corporal, yours is spiritual. Who do you think it is that asks alms of you? It is Jesus, your King, your God, your Father; it is He who, under the guise of poverty, implores your assistance. Oh, happy and honored are the rich, who give alms to Jesus Christ. Accursed those who refuse Him alms.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Redeem thou thy sins with alms, and thy iniquities with works of mercy to the poor." *Daniel*, iv.

"If one of thy brethren that dwelleth within the gates of thy city in the land which the Lord thy God will give thee, come to poverty; thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor close thy hand, but shalt open it to the poor man." *Deut.* xv.

"Blessed is he that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor: the Lord will deliver him in the evil day." *Psalm* xl.

"Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat: I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink: I was a stranger, and you took me in: naked, and you clothed me; sick, and you visited me: I was in prison, and you came to me." *St. Matt.* xxv.

FOURTH MONDAY IN LENT.

Meditation.

THE JEWS PREFER BARABBAS TO JESUS.

1st Point. The innocent is compared to a criminal, the just to a thief, the king to his slave, the God of sanctity to a sinner. This outrage was less painful to his sacred heart than that which you inflict on Him when you compare Him to a creature, and prefer his enemy, the devil, to himself. You are guilty of this as often as you sin? Which do you prefer of the two, Jesus or Satan? The creature or the Creator? Heaven or hell?

2d Point. Oh Jesus, the greatest and most humble of men! Oh first and last! when I see Thee at the feet of Judas, I know not where to place myself. But when I behold Thee put lower than Barabbas, I see no place but hell wherein to hide my confusion. Is it just that I should exalt myself above Thee? Oh, if I prefer myself to the least of thy disciples, I prefer myself to

Thee, since at this stage of thy sacred passion Thou art made the least of all.

3d Point. Oh my soul, how often have you not thus thrown contempt and insult on Jesus! How often preferred some vile interest, or brutal pleasure to his service! Have you not many times cried out with the Jewish rabble: We wish not Jesus, give us Barabbas? Oh, ye heavens, be astonished, my people have committed two crimes: they have left me, the source of living waters, and gone to drink from a broken and corrupted cistern which cannot quench their thirst.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"I have brought up children, and exalted them: but they have despised me." *Isaias*, i.

"To whom have you likened me, and made me equal; and compared me, and made me like?" *Isaias*, xlvi.

"But you denied the Holy and the just One, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you. But the author of life you killed." *Acts*, iii.

FOURTH TUESDAY IN LENT.

Meditation.

ON THE SCOURGES OF OUR LORD.

1st Point. Jesus is beaten like a slave; He is bathed in his blood; his body is disfigured by frightful wounds. There is no part of his flesh that is not bruised and torn. Behold, the Lamb of God scourged by slaves! Almost immolated, there is nothing left but to fasten Him to the Cross! Consider, and see if there is grief like his.

2d Point. Why does He submit to a chastisement so cruel and shameful? It is to show the extent of his love for you; it is to make you understand the enormity of the guilt of sin; it is to expiate, by his sufferings and blood, the infamous pleasures of your flesh; it is to make satisfaction to God his Father for your impurities; it is to show how necessary it is to mortify your body if you wish to become one of his members, and the impossibility of being saved without sufferings.

3d Point. Oh, Christian soul! take the scourge into your own hand and inflict justice on yourself. Say: It is I who have sinned, it is I who deserve chastisement. Is it just that I should be with-

out wounds, seeing my King covered with them? How can my body enter heaven unless it is first purified by sufferings? He who will not be chastised with men must be punished with devils.

Oh, most holy Lamb, what crime has drawn on Thee such pain, and led Thee to submit to ignominies so great? Oh, virginal and sacred flesh! to what a miserable state the impurities of men have reduced Thee! Alas! Thou dost expiate in thy body, the criminal pleasures of ours; it is to make satisfaction for the sins of our flesh that thine is torn and covered with ghastly wounds! Let my body, then, be chastised, since it is that which has caused the evil. I desire tc cut off all sinful pleasures, since they have caused Thee so much grief. I wish to suffer stripes and wounds in order to be like Thee.

Miserable wretch that I am! I sin, and do no penance; I am guilty, and practice no mortification! Oh, my God, I confess my baseness, I have not courage to chastise myself. Take, then, the scourge in thy hand, and spare not thy chastisements. I am prepared to suffer all thou mayest be pleased to inflict on me. Chastise me, if Thou judgest it necessary, but let it be through love and not in anger. Chastise me in time, but not in eternity.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Then, therefore, Pilate took Jesus, and scourged Him." *St. John*, xix.

"So Pilate delivered up Jesus, when he had scourged Him." *St. Mark*, xv.

"For I am ready for scourges: and my sorrow is continually before me." *Psalm* xxxvii.

"For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth; and He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." *Hebrews*, xii.

FOURTH WEDNESDAY IN LENT.

Meditation.

JESUS IS CROWNED WITH THORNS.

1st Point. Jesus came into the world to expiate our offences and bear the pain thereof. Man's head is the source of all sin. It is here that he conceives thoughts of ambition, impurity, injustice and revenge. It was to make satisfaction for these sins

that Jesus desired to be crowned with thorns, that is to say, with ignominies and sufferings.

2d Point. Jesus is a victim who desires to offer himself a holocaust to the Father, and be consumed in the fire of sufferings. His body is covered with wounds; from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot there is not a sound place in Him. He was crowned with thorns that there might remain no part of his body that was not penetrated by severe sufferings, and to verify what He had said: That his kingdom was not of this world.

Christian, behold your King! Do you recognize this crown, this sceptre, and this purple robe? The Jews renounced Him; do you, also, renounce Him? If you are a child of God, you must be mocked, torn and crucified with his divine Son. It is necessary to wear two crowns, one of gold, the other of thorns. If you wear the crown of gold in this life, in the life to come you will be crowned with thorns. If your crown is of thorns in this world, you will be crowned with glory in the world to come.

3d Point. The crowns of the world produce thorns; the thorns of Jesus produce the flowers of unfading and eternal joys. Who would wish to be crowned with glory and pleasures, seeing their King crowned with sorrows and ignominies? How can a member of a thorn-crowned head be exempt from suffering?

There are three sorts of thorns on earth, which grieve and afflict souls—thorns of sin, thorns of temptation, and thorns of penance. Sin is a thorn that pierces and kills the soul; temptation is a thorn that troubles and torments the spirit; penance is a thorn that afflicts the body. The thorn of sin is cruel, bloody, and mortal; the thorn of temptation is dangerous; the thorn of penance is salutary, and produces the flowers of peace and joy at all seasons.

FOURTH THURSDAY IN LENT.

Meditation.

SENTIMENTS OF GRIEF AND COMPASSION FOR THE SUFFERINGS OF JESUS.

1st Point. Daughters of Jerusalem, come forth and see King Solomon with the diadem with which his mother, the Synagogue, has crowned him. Alas! it is not a mother, but a cruel and inhuman tyrant, who crowns himself with roses, and his God with thorns. Daughters of Jerusalem, Christian souls, observe this

Man of sorrows! Behold the Man who has saved you, the Man whom you have crucified! behold the Man who loves you infinitely, the Man whom you cease not to persecute!

2d Point. Oh, most holy God! Thou hast sought a Man to appease thy anger, and one who would submit himself to thy vengeance; behold Him whom we present to Thee! Look on the face of thy Christ, the sight of whose sorrows will subdue the hearts of sinners, and whose intercession will render thee favorable to their prayers. Behold the Man for whom Thou hast created all men, and through whom Thou lovest all men. Behold the robe of thy Son Joseph, torn and bloody; dost thou not recognize it? Behold the King of Martyrs, crowned with grief and ignominy! Behold the High Priest of the New Law, who offers Thee his blood for the salvation of men! Will not this blood efface thy anger? Is not this blood sufficient to cancel all our debts?

3d Point. Daughter of Zion, holy and sorrowful Virgin Mother, come and see the diadem that has been placed upon the head of thy divine Son. Behold the Son whom thou didst conceive by the Holy Ghost, and bring forth without pain or sorrow, whom thou didst watch over with so much anxiety, and sacrifice with so much love! Behold this glorious and magnificent King, who ought to sit on the throne of David and reign over all the earth! Behold this High Priest, whose office it is to appease the anger of God! What a Priest! what a King! what a Child! what a Man! What a spectacle of grief for thee, oh most afflicted mother! How is it that thou didst survive so sorrowful a sight? Ah, it is because it is necessary for thee to accompany Him to Calvary, and behold Him die between two thieves!

Oh, holiest of Men, greatest of Kings, Christians renounce Thee as well as the Jews, and desire no other king than Cæsar, that is to say, the world. The avaricious desire a rich king, the sensual a voluptuous king, and the ambitious a king who is glorious on earth; but, as for me, I choose for my king this Man of sorrows, who is poor and despised; I desire no other king than Jesus, and no other crown than that of Jesus.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"And the soldiers, platting a crown of thorns, put it upon his head: and they put on Him a purple garment." *St. John*, xix.

"Behold your King! Behold the Man." *St. John*, xix.

"We have no king but Cæsar." *Ibid.*

"O my King and my God!" *Psalm* v.

"He will crown thee with a crown of tribulation." *Isaias*, xxii.

FOURTH FRIDAY IN LENT.

Meditation.

ON THE SENTENCE OF DEATH PRONOUNCED AGAINST JESUS.

1st Point. The Jews clamored for the death of Jesus. Pilate, who was convinced of his innocence, wished to evade the demand. The Jews declared: "*We have a law, and according to the law He ought to die, because He made himself the Son of God.*" "*Take Him you,*" saith Pilate, "*and crucify Him, for I find no cause in Him.*" The law of the world condemns the Son of God to death! All worldlings cry, through the mouth of the Jews, crucify Him! crucify Him! If you are a slave to the maxims of the world you conspire, with the Jews, against Jesus. Christians have also a law which condemns to death a sensual and voluptuous life.

2d Point. Pilate questioned Jesus, and Jesus replied not to him, because he had been guilty of an act of great injustice, and inflicted cruel injuries on Him, even while he believed Him to be innocent; because he did not profit by what Jesus had already said to him, or desire to learn the truth; because he had spoken with an air of authority, and was proud and unjust in saying to Him that he *could deliver* or *condemn Him*; for if he could have delivered the innocent he should have done it, since he was invested with power only that he might acquit himself of his duty. Behold how dangerous it is not to profit by the Word of God! He keeps silence and speaks no more.

You complain that God no longer responds to you in prayer, and ask the cause of his silence. Perhaps you have offended Him and excited his anger by mortal sin, or that your continual and dissipated intercourse with the world is displeasing to Him, or that your heart is too much set on some earthly object, all of which render the soul deaf to his voice. It may be that you are too curious in spiritual things, or desire to learn without toil, or think, in your presumption, that He may unite himself to your soul without the intervention of the senses, either corporal or spiritual. If thus tempted, it is necessary to humiliate, but not trouble yourself.

3d Point. Pilate is afraid to condemn Jesus Christ, not only because he is convinced of his innocence, but that he has also discovered a power of divinity in Him, which terrifies and makes him tremble, notwithstanding which, when he heard the people threatening him with the anger of Cæsar, he betrayed his con-

science, and delivered Him to his enemies, that they might satisfy their fury by putting Him to death. Oh, human respect! Oh, miserable fear of the world! It is this that has condemned and put to death the Son of God! It is this which causes Him to die every day in the hearts of men! They are afraid of giving offence to Cæsar. Judges condemn the innocent to gratify the vengeance of the great. Christians commit acts of injustice to please their friends. Mercenary souls betray their conscience and condemn Jesus to death to preserve their goods, their fortune, and their employment.

Oh, sweet Jesus, condemned to an ignominious death! All the world cry out, Crucify Him! crucify Him! and no voice is heard in his defence, to deliver or give Him life. Thou didst submit to all this through obedience to thy Father in heaven, whose will it was for Thee to die, but who desired not the sin of this wicked judge. Thou dost submit to deliver us from eternal death, the sentence of which was issued against all the children of Adam, to show the love Thou hast for us and thy desire to suffer for us. Thou dost submit in order that we may be submissive to the chastisements of God, and that we may not be troubled as to whether the person who afflicts and injures us is good or wicked, or whether they are guided by reason or passion.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"When Pilate, therefore, had heard this saying, he feared the more. And he entered into the hall again; and he said to Jesus: Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer." *St. John*, xix.

"If thou release this man thou art not Cæsar's friend." *Ibid.*

"Then, therefore, he delivered Him to them to be crucified." *Ibid.*

"And having scourged Jesus, delivered Him to them to be crucified." *St. Matt.* xxvii.

"Let us condemn Him to a most shameful death." *Wisdom*, ii.

"He was offered because it was his own will, and He opened not his mouth: He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be as a lamb before the shearer, and He shall not open his mouth." *Isaias*, liii.

FOURTH SATURDAY IN LENT.

Meditation.

JESUS IS ABANDONED TO THE POWER OF HIS ENEMIES.

1st Point. He was abandoned by Pilate, who should have defended his innocence, and who ought to have died rather than commit so great an act of injustice. He was abandoned by his disciples, who had declared they would go with Him even unto death. He was abandoned by God his Father, who could have delivered Him from the power of his enemies, but who permitted them to exercise over Him all the cruelties and ignominies that their wicked malice could devise. Oh! how often have you not abandoned Him, base Christian, when you beheld Him condemned and outraged by the impious!

2d Point. God the Father abandoned his divine Son to the power of his enemies, and do you learn from this to abandon yourself to the will of God, who is the best of all fathers. Why should you mistrust Him? Do you doubt his power or his love? What can you refuse Him who has given his only Son and delivered Him up to death for your salvation? Can your honor, goods, health, life, soul, and salvation be in better keeping than his? Why do you not abandon yourself entirely to him? Why so many cares, so much trouble and inquietude, when there is so good a Father who careth for you?

3d Point. Jesus is abandoned by his Father, but not by our Blessed Lady, who had followed Him thus far, step by step, through the bitter way of his passion, and was present at his condemnation. Who can conceive her grief, when she beheld his sacred flesh so frightfully torn, that his bones were exposed to sight; when she saw Him bathed in his blood, wearing on his shoulders a purple rag, holding in his hand the reed which his enemies had placed there in derision, and crowned with thorns! Oh, who can comprehend her affliction, when she heard the Jews crying out with tumultuous fury: *Away with Him! away with Him! Crucify Him! crucify Him! His blood be upon us and upon our children!* Consider the grief and agony that pierced her soul when she saw Pilate wash his hands, and heard him pronounce sentence of death against her divine Son, and then abandon Him to his enemies, who, with renewed imprecations and insults, seize Him, and prepare to nail Him to the cross!

Oh, most afflicted Mother! God has also abandoned thee, and

thou feelest in thy sacred heart all that thy dear Son does in his body. Oh, who is there so insensible as not to be touched with tender compassion at thy wondrous grief! Since God has abandoned Jesus and Mary, the two persons most dear to Him in heaven or earth, have I, a sinner, not reason to fear that He will abandon me to the power of the devil, to be tempted, tormented, and afflicted in my body and soul, and in all that belongs to me? Oh, my God, my Father! I abandon myself to Thee, but do not Thou, I beseech Thee, abandon me to the power of my enemies.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"And he released unto them him who, for murder and sedition, had been cast into prison, whom they had desired: but JESUS he delivered up to their will." *St. Luke*, xxiii.

"To Thee is the poor man left: Thou wilt be a helper to the orphan." *Psalm* ix.

"Oh God, my God, look upon me: Why hast Thou forsaken me?" *Psalm* xxi.

"To what shall I compare thee, or to what shall I liken thee, O daughter of Jerusalem? To what shall I equal thee, that I may comfort thee, O virgin daughter of Sion? for great as the sea is thy destruction; who shall heal thee?" *Lamentations*, ii.

PASSION SUNDAY.

THE GOSPEL. *St. John*, viii. 46–59.

"AT that time, Jesus said to the multitude of the Jews: Which of you shall convince me of sin? If I say the truth to you, why do you not believe me? He that is of God, heareth the words of God. Therefore, you hear them not, because you are not of God. The Jews, therefore, answered and said to Him: Do we not say well that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? Jesus answered: I have not a devil; but I honor my Father, and you have dishonored me. But I seek not my own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. Amen, amen, I say to you, if any man keep my word, he shall not see death forever. The Jews, therefore, said: Now we know that Thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets: and Thou sayest: If any man keep my word, he shall not taste death forever. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? and the prophets are dead. Whom dost thou make thyself? Jesus answered: If I glorify

myself, my glory is nothing: it is my Father that glorifieth me, of whom you say that He is your God. And you have not known Him: but I know Him: and if I should say that I know Him not, I should be like you, a liar. But I do know Him, and do keep his word. Abraham, your father, rejoiced that he might see my day: he saw it, and was glad. The Jews then said to Him: Thou art not yet fifty years old; and hast Thou seen Abraham? Jesus said to them: Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am. They took up stones, therefore, to cast at Him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple."

Meditation.

ON THE GOSPEL OF THE DAY.

1st Point. A Christian's whole life should be a season of abstinence and trial; abstinence by separating himself from all worldly pleasures, and trial by humble resignation to suffering and grief. After death, if such has been our life, we will celebrate a perpetual Easter in heaven, and know a day of consolation and rejoicing without end. Oh, you will then be satisfied with having fasted in Lent and mortified your passions; with having borne your cross with patience, and suffered many griefs for the love of Jesus.

2d Point. Why did not the Jews believe the words of Jesus, for a master is worthy of belief, whose doctrines are pure and whose life is irreproachable. The doctrine of the Son of God was holy; He preached the truth to them and confirmed it by wonderful miracles, and nothing could be found more holy than his life. Why, then, did they disbelieve his word and reject his doctrines? Because they were haughty, and desired not to learn any thing from a man whom they looked on as an inferior; they hated Him, because He reproved their vices and chided their hypocrisy, and were filled with envy on seeing the people listen with attention to his discourses, and applaud his miracles. Behold the causes of their incredulity! We do not desire to submit our spirits to the mysteries of truth, and our judgment to the direction of God, because one is incomprehensible to human reason, and the other displeasing to nature. We have wicked hearts, which corrupt the understanding and turn us away from the contemplation of eternal truths; we have passions, which render the spirit blind and delude our minds. Behold the causes which prevent our believing the Word of God, and being converted to Him.

3D POINT. "*He that is of God heareth the words of God.*" Who are you? whence came you? whither are you going? what will become of you? Are you one of the predestined, or are you a reprobate? Judge yourself by the sentiments with which you receive the Word of God, by the pleasure you take in hearing it, by the care you take to preserve it, by the obedience you show it, by your fidelity in putting it into practice. You are not of God if you take no pleasure in hearing his Word.

4TH POINT. "*I honor my Father, and you have dishonored me,*" said our Lord to the Jews. Do you not also deserve this reproach? Do you not dishonor Jesus and betray his interests? Might He not address himself to you in the words of the Prophet: "*I have brought up children and exalted them, and they have despised me!*" You dishonor God by your wicked life and actions, your scandalous words, and your unfaithfulness to a profession or vocation which should make your life more regular and holy. Why, oh Christian soul, will you dishonor so good a Master? When will you begin to honor Him?

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"If I have spoken evil give testimony of the evil: but if well, why strikest thou me?" *St. John*, xviii.

"He that heareth you, heareth me; he that despiseth you, despiseth me." *St. Luke*, x.

"They are of the world: therefore of the world they speak, and the world heareth them." 1 *John*, iv.

"We are of God. He that knoweth God, heareth us: he that is not of God, heareth us not. And every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God." *Ibid.*

MONDAY IN PASSION WEEK.

Meditation.

JESUS CARRIES HIS CROSS.

1ST POINT. The enemies of Jesus, having placed the cross on his wounded and bleeding shoulders, He went with it towards Golgotha, but, overcome by the heavy burden, He fell fainting beneath it. They inflicted heavy blows on Him with their hands; they struck Him with a knotted stick, and kicked him with violence to make Him rise, but his strength was gone, and He could

no longer obey them. They then laid hands on a stranger from the country, one Simon, lifted the cross to his shoulders, and compelled him to follow Jesus with it.

Why did He permit them to relieve Him, by taking from Him the cross He loved so much? Could He not have repaired his strength by a miracle, and continued to carry it? It was done to teach us that we deserve the cross; that He bore it through love of us; that we aid Him in carrying the cross when we bear ours with patience; that to be his disciple it is necessary for us to carry the cross, and follow Him whither He goeth; that He assists us in carrying our cross, and we ought to rejoice when we have an opportunity to carry his.

2d Point. Happy Simon, (happy through obedience,) who had the honor to bear the cross of Jesus! Christian, the same privilege is yours; all your crosses are fragments of his; they have either touched his soul or body. He drank of our chalice and, draining it of all its bitterness, left us the sweetness thereof. He suffered all that we suffer, and felt all that we do. He espoused our griefs; there is not one that has not pierced and afflicted his sacred heart.

3d Point. Oh, Jesus my Lord! I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest, and, as Thou hast carried thy cross, I will take up mine and follow thy steps even unto death. It is the trophy of my salvation, the standard of my faith, and the seal of my predestination. Oh, how miserable are those who trample it under foot, betray or abandon it! Save me from this, dear Jesus, and give me grace to carry it even to Calvary. Oh, holy cross, consecrated by the blood of Jesus! Receive me in thy arms, and let me repose on thy bosom; give thyself all to me, and I will abandon myself entirely to Thee! I espoused Thee in baptism; the vow is made, the union is indissoluble, and death alone can separate us.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"And, bearing his own cross, He went forth to that place which is called Calvary, but in Hebrew Golgotha." *St. John*, xix.

"Come follow me." *St. Mark*, x.

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." *St. Matt.* xvi.

"I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." *St. Luke*, ix.

"He was wounded for our iniquities, he was bruised for our sins: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by his bruises we are healed." *Isaias*, liii.

TUESDAY IN PASSION WEEK.

Meditation.

JESUS ON THE CROSS.

1st Point. The inhuman persecutors of Jesus renewed his sufferings, by stripping Him roughly of his garments, which adhered to his sacred wounds; after which they laid Him on the cross. They handled Him with taunts and jeers, extended his limbs with cruel violence, and nailed his hands and feet to the wood; then, raising Him on high, He was exposed to view, a spectacle for angels and men. He rested only on his wounds, from which issued forth those precious streams which enrich the Church that He came to establish, and efface the sins of mankind.

He desired the cruel and ignominious death of the cross, to encourage you, by his example, to die for Him; to repair the sin of the first man, who ate the fruit of the forbidden tree; to raise our hearts to heaven, according to what He had foretold, that He would draw all hearts to Him, when He should be lifted up from the earth; to signify, by the four extremities of the cross, the four quarters of the world whose inhabitants He came to save; to show his goodness and mercy, by extending his arms to receive all sinners, and make known to us the height and depth, the length and breadth of divine charity. Finally, He died on it, to accomplish the design which He had prefigured, when He said that the world should be saved by the wood of the cross, as it had been before saved by the ark of Noe and the rod of Moses. Oh, how shall those who have a horror of the cross, and evade it whenever they can, be saved!

2d Point. They gave Him vinegar, mixed with gall, to drink, and he accepted the bitter draught, that nothing might be wanting that could augment his grief or lend weight to his sufferings. His enemies insulted his miseries, railed at Him, assailed Him with curses and blasphemies, and, in derision, invited Him to come down from the cross! Oh, it is a difficult and painful thing for one who is innocent to remain silent and patient under injury, when it is in his power to be revenged on the enemies who triumph over his misfortune, and take advantage of his weakness. But we must imitate Jesus in the ignominies he suffered, if we desire to be partakers of his glory in the world to come. Alas! how is it that we can seek only sweetness and consolation, when Jesus has drained the chalice of bitterness and grief!

3D POINT. Oh, Saviour of the world, I adore Thee on this thy throne of sorrow and ignominy; I cast myself into thy arms, which Thou hast opened to receive me; I throw myself at thy feet, that I may be washed in the saving fountain that flows from them! Oh sacred victim, consumed by suffering! Oh high priest of the New Law! Why dost Thou remain on this altar? Why dost Thou not descend from the cross? If Thou wouldst descend, all men, seeing thy power, would believe in Thee.

Do not descend, oh Divine Wisdom, from the cross. If Thou art the Son of God Thou wilt die thereon! If Thou shouldst come down and save thyself, they will not follow Thee, they will also fly the cross; they will refuse to carry it, or die on it.

My soul, regard your SAVIOUR on the cross. *Your* sins have nailed Him there! He was crucified once on Calvary; but how often have you not crucified Him in your heart! As often as you have sinned mortally, so often have you crucified Jesus! You must crucify Him or your passions.

Oh, sweet Jesus! destroy my life, for fear I may be so miserable as to destroy thine in my soul by mortal sin. Crucify my body, for fear I may crucify thy spirit. Fasten me to thy cross with the nails of fear, hope, and love, that I may never again be separated from Thee.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"They crucified Him, and with Him two others, one on each side, and Jesus in the midst." *John*, xix.

"And they gave Him wine to drink, mingled with gall." *St. Matthew*, xxvii.

"With Christ I am nailed to the cross." *Galatians*, ii.

"And they that are Christ's have crucified their flesh with the vices and concupiscences." *Galatians*, v.

"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world." *Galatians*, vi.

WEDNESDAY IN PASSION WEEK.

Meditation.

JESUS PRAYS FOR HIS ENEMIES.

1ST POINT. Exalted on the cross, Jesus Christ was exposed to the profane gaze of a blasphemous multitude. No complaint

escaped his lips. He uttered not a word, until, moved with tender compassion for his enemies, He cried out, "*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*" The blood of Abel demanded vengeance, the blood of Jesus plead only for mercy and grace for those who shed it; and when they insulted his mercy, He excused their sin, diminished their malice, and assumed the office of advocate for them, notwithstanding that they had accused Him falsely, judged Him through passion, condemned Him through malice, and crucified Him between two thieves, as the greatest indignity they could offer Him. He forgot his own bitter anguish to think of those who persecuted Him unto death. Their guilt afflicted Him more than all the torments He endured.

2D POINT. Keep silence, Christian soul, when on the cross of suffering. Complain not of your misfortunes, lose not the fruit of your trials, pray for your enemies, forget the injuries they have inflicted on you, excuse their intention, if you cannot excuse their acts. If you refuse them a grace which they do not merit, how can you expect to obtain grace from God?

3D POINT. Oh, most amiable and compassionate Lord! when will I begin to imitate thy mercy and sweetness? Thy precepts command me, thy love urges me, thy example engages me by a sweet and irresistible power. I pardon all who have offended me. I forgive all who have outraged, persecuted, and crucified me.

Alas! they know not what they do. They believe that they do me much evil, when, in fact, they procure me much good. When they think they do me good, they bring evil on me. By their injuries they provide me with more occasions of merit than I can procure for myself. By their worldly counsels and dangerous flatteries, they do me more evil than I would do them, or desire for them. Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. I sin through malice, they through ignorance. They believe they have good reason to treat me as they do; and I entertain too great a desire to be revenged on them. If they had received the numerous graces, of which I have been the recipient, they would be more faithful servants of God than I am. If I had been tempted as they have, I should, perhaps, have lost the grace of God, and become more wicked than they.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"My Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." *Luke*, xxiii.

"But I say unto you: Love your enemies: do good to them

that hate you: and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you." *St. Matt.* v.

"Forgive thy neighbor if he hath hurt thee, and then thy sins shall be forgiven thee when thou prayest." *Ecclesiasticus*, xxviii.

"Revenge not yourself, dearly beloved, but give place to wrath; for vengeance is mine, and I will repay, saith the Lord." *Romans*, xii.

THURSDAY IN PASSION WEEK.

Meditation.

ON THE PENITENCE OF THE GOOD THIEF AND THE IMPENITENCE OF THE BAD.

1st Point. One of the thieves who were crucified with Jesus confessed Him, the other renounced Him; one adored Him, the other blasphemed Him; one ascended to Heaven from his cross, the other descended into hell from his; one was saved at the side of Jesus, the other was damned at the side of Jesus. He was the Redeemer of both, but only one profited by the salvation prepared for them. He offered his life for both, and one died in his impenitence and obstinacy.

Oh, judgments of God, how profound! Oh, goodness of God, how infinite and sweet! Oh, justice of God, how terrible! Oh, ways of God, how admirable! Who will not fear eternal loss? Who may not hope for eternal life? One can be lost anywhere, since a criminal damned himself at the side of Jesus, who was shedding his blood and dying for him. One may hope at all times, since a malefactor saved himself at the last hour of a wicked and criminal life.

2d Point. Admire the faith of the good thief who believed in and confessed Jesus when He was naked on the cross, borne down with a load of suffering, mocked and blasphemed by the doctors and priests of the law, and in a state so little in conformity with the dignity of his divine nature. Admire his hope, which inspired him to ask Jesus to remember him, when He entered into his kingdom. Consider his charity towards God in defending the innocence of Jesus Christ against those who assailed it; towards his neighbor, by correcting the error of his guilty companion, and endeavoring to inspire him with sentiments of faith, humility, and piety. In fine, admire his patience, humility, and penitence, and

endeavor to imitate the virtues which rendered his contrition so perfect.

3d Point. Jesus forgot his own cruel sufferings to attend to the prayer of a malefactor. He forgave him all his sins, and, with an oath, promised him paradise. Oh, incomparable prince! who was not jealous of his crown, but willing to divide his empire with a thief. Oh, liberal Master! who gives his servants so liberal a recompense.

Oh precious and consoling words to the sick and weary soul: This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise! Oh Lord, I say to Thee, with this great penitent: "*Remember me when Thou comest into thy kingdom!*" We truly deserve the cross, but as for Thee, what hast Thou done to deserve so cruel a death? Let me also be crucified with Thee, that I may hear Thee say at the moment when my soul is on the eve of departing from my body: "*This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.*"

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"And one of the robbers who were crucified with Him, blasphemed, saying: If thou art Christ, save thyself and us." *Luke*, xxiii.

"But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying: Neither dost thou fear God, seeing thou art under the same condemnation." *Ibid.*

"And we indeed suffer justly; for we receive the due reward of our sins: but this man hath done no evil." *Ibid.*

"And he said to Jesus: Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into thy kingdom. And Jesus said to him: Amen, I say to thee, this day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." *Ibid.*

"And I say to you: In that night there shall be two men in one bed: the one shall be taken and the other left." *St. Luke*, xvii.

FRIDAY IN PASSION WEEK.

Meditation.

ON THE PASSION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

"*Woman, behold thy Son. Son, behold thy Mother.*"

1st Point. Oh sweet and merciful Jesus, couldst Thou not have spared thy tender and sorrowful mother the pain of seeing Thee suffer and die? What had she done that she must take part in thy sacrifice, and witness the agony that she could neither relieve

nor soothe? What greater pain could have been inflicted on her, than to be obliged to stand by and behold her only Son expiring in such cruel torments? What greater grief for Thee than to die in the presence of thy desolate and afflicted Mother? What mother is comparable to MARY? What son comparable to Jesus? What tortures comparable to those of the cross?

2D POINT. God desired that the Holy Virgin should be at the foot of the cross, and, by the sacrifice of her only Son, co-operate in our redemption, by offering to the Almighty Father that which was most precious and dear to her, to repair thereby the fault of Eve who caused our loss; to increase the grief of her Son, by her presence; to bear part in his sorrows; to drink of his chalice; to become the Queen of Martyrs, of whom her Son was the King; to be as He was, crowned with opprobriums and ignominies; to receive all the predestined who were given to her in the person of the beloved disciple, and to be declared their Mother by these words: "*Woman, behold thy Son; Son, behold thy Mother!*"

3D POINT. Mary endured all that Jesus suffered. The sword that entered his sacred side pierced her afflicted soul. The wounds that disfigured his flesh filled hers with suffering inconceivable. The stripes that had lacerated Him were imprinted in her heart.

The martyrs suffered in their bodies, Mary suffered in her soul; the martyrs suffered in their criminal flesh, Mary suffered in the innocent flesh of her Son. The hearts of the martyrs were filled with joy, and the heart of Mary with desolation. Love diminished the pangs of the martyrs; love increased the pangs of Mary! Can she not truly say: There is no grief comparable to mine?

SATURDAY IN PASSION WEEK.

Meditation.

THE PASSION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN, CONTINUED.

1ST POINT. Jesus was crucified in his body and soul; in his body on the cross, and in his soul in the heart of his holy mother. Mary was crucified spiritually and corporally; spiritually in her soul, corporally in the flesh of her divine Son. Love imprinted on her heart all the wounds that the scourge had inflicted on his body. Those that were not mortal to the Son were so to the Mother. The lance that opened the side of Jesus after He was

dead pierced the living heart of Mary. Never has a mother loved or suffered as the Mother of Jesus did.

Oh, daughter of Zion, to whom shall I compare thee? Thy grief is without example: only the sorrows of thy divine Son are comparable to thine; only his surpass thine. He is the King of martyrs, thou art the Queen! He is the MAN OF SORROWS, and thou art the Mother of sorrows!

2D POINT. Christian soul, go with MARY to Calvary, take part in her affliction, mingle your tears with hers, and consider the excess of her grief. She stood by the cross of Jesus. What strength! what virtue! what constancy! While there, pray to be received among the number of her children. Imitate her patience to render yourself worthy of such a mother. To receive this honor, you must, like her, stand by the cross, kneel at the foot of the cross, and there wait daily. It is only here that she receives those who are presented to her, by her divine Son, as the children of her adoption.

Renew not her dolors; do not augment her afflictions. When you sin mortally, you crucify her Son anew in your heart; you deprive Him of a life more dear to Him than the one He lost on the cross. Oh, this death is most painful and bitter to Him, and afflicts the heart of his holy Mother, who cannot bear to see the fruits of all He suffered made useless by the guilt of those for whom He suffered. She consented to the corporal death of her Son, but not to his spiritual death in the souls of men. The first gave them life, the second gives them death. She did not complain of the Jews, although they were wicked and criminal, but she has reason to complain of Christians, who are faithless to Jesus who redeemed them, and to her who suffered with Him for their salvation.

3D POINT. Suffer, then, with patience and submission like hers, all that may afflict your body or soul; be constant in tribulation. Continue beside the cross in your desolation. Do not murmur against the order of God's providence, however severe it may appear to you, but draw near to Jesus crucified, and hear Him say from his throne of suffering, "*Son, behold thy Mother; Mother, behold thy Son!*" Do you not desire to belong to the family of Jesus Christ? Become, then, a child of Mary, and you will be a member thereof.

Oh, most holy and afflicted Virgin! oh, Queen of martyrs! oh, Mother of sorrows! impress on my heart the wounds of thy Son! Obtain for me grace to love his cross, and courage to take part in his sufferings. Pierce my heart with the sword of grief

that pierced thy own. Let me drink of the same bitter chalice that thou didst, and, above all, I conjure thee to assist at the hour of my death, as thou didst at that of thy divine Son, receive my soul into thy hands, and return it to Him who gave it.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Who shall find a valiant woman? far, and from the uttermost coasts is the price of her." *Prov.* xxxi.

"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his Mother." *St. John*, xix.

"Jesus said to his mother: Woman, behold thy Son." *Ibid.*

"And He said to his disciple: Behold thy Mother." *Ibid.*

"And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed." *St. Luke*, ii.

PALM SUNDAY.

THE GOSPEL. *Matt.* xxi. 1–9.

"AT that time, when Jesus drew nigh to Jerusalem, and was come to Bethphage, unto Mount Olivet, then He sent two disciples, saying to them: Go ye into the village, that is over against you: and immediately ye will find an ass tied, and a colt with her; loose them, and bring them to me. And if any man shall say any thing to you, say ye, that the Lord hath need of them: and forthwith he will let them go. Now all this was done, that the word might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: Tell ye the daughter of Sion. Behold, thy King cometh to thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass and a colt, the foal of her that is used to the yoke. And the disciples going, did as Jesus commanded them. And they brought the ass, and the colt, and laid their garments upon them, and made Him sit thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way, and others cut down boughs from the trees, and strewed them in the way; and the multitude that went before, and that followed, cried, saying: Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Meditation.

ON THE ENTRANCE OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM.

1ST POINT. Jesus went triumphing to death. He knew all that awaited Him at Jerusalem, and had foretold to his disciples how

He was to be betrayed to the *chief priests and scribes, who would condemn Him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles to be mocked, scourged and crucified.* But, notwithstanding all, He went thither promptly and joyfully. Whence arose this eagerness and joy? It was because He desired infinitely to suffer and die for our salvation, to show thereby his great love for us; to honor his heavenly Father, and accomplish his will. It was to crown his ignominy and humiliations with glory and triumph; it was to eat the pasch and institute the sacrament of his body and blood, that he might perpetuate on our altars the sacrifice He offered on Calvary.

Christian soul, do you imitate the example of your divine Lord? do you suffer, with Jesus, resignedly and joyfully? do you go triumphantly to death? do you allow yourself to be led thither as a victim to the sacrifice? Is there any thing more noble than to die for God; any thing more just than to give your life to Him who gave his for you; any thing sweeter or more consolatory than to offer Him proofs of your love; any thing of greater merit in his eyes than to sacrifice those things which, of all the world, we love best, for the sake of Jesus? On the contrary, is there any thing more cowardly, unjust, and deplorable, than to shrink away at the approach of death? to allow despair to enter the soul, or feel unwilling to pay so lawful a debt, or pay it with such regret as to lose the merit of the greatest and most important act of our lives?

2D POINT. Jesus enters your heart in triumph whenever you communicate worthily at the divine banquet of the altar. His triumph here is infinitely sweet and glorious to Him, because the heart into which He enters is a kingdom, the conquest of which cost Him his life! Daughters of Sion rejoice, behold your King, who approaches, full of sweetness and love. It is your King, and not a tyrant; He is not a severe Judge, but a Prince full of peace and compassion; He comes not to destroy you, or to punish your treasons and rebellions, but to save you, to sanctify you, to pardon your sins, to communicate to you the merits of his passion, to animate you by his spirit, pour out his graces on you, and give you part with Him in the abundance of the glory and felicity of his heavenly kingdom.

3D POINT. What preparations will you make, daughters of Sion, to receive your King? You must go before Him, bearing a palm, to signify the victory you have gained over the world, the devil, and your own evil passions. It is necessary to divest yourself of the wicked habits with which your soul is clothed, and place them under the feet of Jesus Christ; you must break off

branches, that is to say, cut off all that is superfluous in yourself, whether it be in words, habits, nourishment, or amusements, by continual mortifications; you must give alms to the poor, and make them your care and treasure. If any one question or praise your works, say: *The Lord hath need of them*, it is in his name, and for Him, that I labor.

Sing, then, with the multitude, Hosanna to the Son of David! blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest. Receive Him with joy; receive Him in your inmost soul; take care that you do not betray Him, outrage and crucify Him, as the Jews did three days after they had received Him. Oh, inconstancy of man! oh, vanity of life! oh, perfidy of the human heart! how often have ye not crucified Him, after having welcomed and received Him in triumph? Humiliate yourself, and ask forgiveness of your offended Lord, for having so betrayed his interests, and resolve to be more faithful to Him in future.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Then Thomas said to his fellow disciples: Let us also go, that we may die with Him." *St. John*, xi.

"With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you before I suffer." *St. Luke*, xxii.

"I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized: and how am I straitened until it be accomplished." *St. Luke*, xii.

"He came unto his own, and his own received Him not." *St. John*, i.

"And they indeed went from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus." *Acts*, v.

MONDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

Meditation.

ON THE ABANDONMENT OF OUR SAVIOUR ON THE CROSS.

1st Point. "*My God! my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*" Oh how terrible must have been that abandonment, which forced tears and sighs from a God, and made Him complain before his enemies, who triumphed; before many who believed no longer that He was the Son of God, but a wicked man, since He was thus abandoned by his Father!

2d Point. Jesus was never separated from either grace or glory; his divinity was never separated from his humanity. He was always holy, always happy, always God. This terrible abandonment was only a suspension of the succors and sensible consolations that his divinity imparted to his humanity; it was a shadow and figure of the pain a sinner feels in hell when he is abandoned by God.

3d Point. Oh, my God, the agony that thy divine Son suffered on the cross gives me an idea of what the damned endure. Thy temporary abandonment of the just affords me some conception of the horrors of thy eternal abandonment of the wicked. If the loss of thy presence was so bitterly and sensibly felt by thy Son, who can bear for ever the weight of thy infinite anger? who can suffer, in hell, an eternal separation from Thee, an eternal privation of thy grace, thy love, thy presence, thy consolations, thy succor, thy providence, thy felicity, and of all that the immortal soul values, desires and loves; who could, added to this, suffer an everlasting deluge of evil in the actual presence of all that the soul most fears and is most afflicted by?

Oh, my God, do not abandon me, although I deserve it, having so often abandoned Thee. Deprive me, if such be thy will, of all consolation, but not of thy grace; abandon me, if necessary, in life, but not at the hour of my death. If Thou shouldst abandon me in time, oh abandon me not in eternity.

Oh, Jesus my Saviour, why art Thou abandoned by thy Father? What hast Thou done? It is I who deserve to be abandoned; it is I who am guilty, and have sinned. Oh, thy abandonment terrifies and consoles me at the same time; it fills me with terror to see what I merit; it fills me with consolation to see what I ought to hope for; for if Thou wast abandoned at thy death, it was that I may not be at mine. Oh, Lord, be Thou with me and succor me, when all the world shall have forsaken me.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" *St. Matt.* xxvii.

"Forsake me not, O Lord my God: do not Thou depart from me." *Psalm* xxxvii.

"Cast me not off in the time of old age: when my strength shall fail me, do not Thou forsake me." *Psalm* lxx.

"I will not leave thee, neither will I forsake thee." *Heb.* xiii.

TUESDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

Meditation.

ON THE THIRST OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

1st Point. Jesus said, *I thirst;* and they offered Him only vinegar and gall to drink! He desired this torment to make satisfaction for our gluttony, and bear the penalty of the sins we commit by excess, or too great a fondness for delicate and expensive food. He was abandoned in his soul and body. In his soul, by a suspension of all sensible consolation; in his body, by the suffering of all imaginable evils.

All his senses, corporal and spiritual, were crucified on Calvary. His eyes, by the sight of his enemies; his ears, by their blasphemies; his smell, by the infectious odors of the place; his touch, by the wounds that covered his body; his taste, by the vinegar and gall; his memory, by the recollection of our crimes; his spirit, by the darkness which seemed to conceal from Him the will of his Father, and which wrung from Him that bitter cry: *My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?* His will, by fear and dejection; his appetite, by disgust, sadness, and grief. There was no part of his body that was not pierced with wounds; no power of his soul but what was plunged in unspeakable grief. He suffered as if He had been a mere man, without drawing any other succor from his divinity than a strength to suffer without dying. God wrought a miracle, not to relieve his Son from suffering, but to prevent his dying under those sufferings; and you desire Him to work a miracle to preserve you from suffering and death.

2d Point. The divine victim was torn by whips without, but within He was yet sound. For this reason He made the bitterness of his chalice descend into his body, by enduring the most cruel thirst that was ever suffered, and drinking the vinegar and gall which they offered Him. It was then that the book of the Lamb was written within and without. Within, by the justice of his Father; without, by the cruelty of men. Within, by interior pains; without, by exterior sufferings.

3d Point. Jesus complained of being thirsty, knowing well that they would give Him vinegar and gall to drink; He complained of his sufferings only that He might suffer more; He make known to us his grief that we might know his love; He thirsted for our salvation; He was consumed with the desire of

bringing sinners to repentance; of freeing the captive, and making the miserable rejoice. It was love that made Him complain, love that made Him suffer, love that made Him die!

Oh, Jesus my Lord and my merciful Redeemer, how can I relieve or quench the thirst that consumes Thee? "Hear me," says Jesus from the cross, "Leave the sins that so often wound me; forsake thy evil companions, who may cause the loss of thy soul, and who daily offend and displease me; approach my cross by continual meditations on my sufferings; be frequent in prayer; receive me often in Holy Communion; abstain from railleries and slander; pardon the injustice and injuries inflicted on thee, and keep silence when angry. Behold whereby thou mayest quench my thirst and alleviate my sufferings; behold how thou mayest refresh me; behold wherein thou mayest console me."

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Afterwards Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said: I thirst." *St. John*, xix.

"O that some man would give me water of the cistern of Bethlehem, which is in the gate." 2 *Kings*, xxiii.

"And they gave me gall for my food: and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." *Psalm* lxviii.

"As the heart panteth after the fountains of waters; so my soul panteth after Thee, O God. My soul hath thirsted after the strong living God; when shall I come, and appear before the face of God?" *Psalm* xli.

WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

Meditation.

"*It is consummated.*"

1st Point. When Jesus had taken the vinegar, He said: *It is consummated.* The holocaust is consumed in the fire of my love and sufferings; the will of my Father is accomplished; the Gospel is announced; the prophecies are fulfilled; the ransom of mankind is paid; their sins are forgiven; the captives are delivered; paradise is opened; the sacraments are instituted; fountains of grace flow forth to the uttermost ends of the earth; the devil is vanquished; the sins of the world are atoned for! I have nothing more to say, to do, or to suffer.

2D POINT. Oh, what consummation more full of joy and peace than that of the faithful servants of God! Oh, what consummation more replete with misery and anguish than that of sinners!

It is consummated! the dying sinner exclaims. My pleasures are vanished, my amusements are over, my beautiful and joyous days are eclipsed, my hopes are forever gone, my time is irrevocably lost, my life is near its close, my malice is consummated and at an end! In a little while, I will enter into a life of suffering that will never end, and know a misery that will be eternal!

3D POINT. *It is consummated*, says the dying Christian; my evil days are over, my sufferings are ended, my combats finished, my troubles are calmed and dispersed, my griefs are soothed, my infirmities healed, my tears all wiped away, and my miseries forever ended. *It is consummated.* There is nothing more for me to do. The cross is laid down at the portals of death; there are no more evils for me to fear or endure; no sins to avoid; no more penance to perform. I shall soon enter into a life of peace and rest, where my joy will be full and eternal.

4TH POINT. Christian soul, you must choose one or the other of these two consummations. An hour rapidly approaches, when you will be obliged to say, "*It is consummated.*" Will you say it with Lazarus, or will you say it with Dives? Will you say it with Jesus, or will you say it with Pilate? In that hour you will discover that all you have loved in the world, and all that it has promised, is only deceit and vanity.

Oh Jesus, author and finisher of our salvation! I offer Thee my life and the consummation thereof, as Thou hast given thine for me! Give me grace to do thy will, to sacrifice myself to thy glory, to be consumed with divine love, to make my body a victim of suffering, to fulfill all thy designs, and acquit myself of all my duties, that I may say with my failing breath: It is done: all is accomplished: *It is consummated.*

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"It is consummated." *St. John*, xix.

"For by one oblation He hath perfected, forever, them that are sanctified." *Hebrews*, viii.

"Looking on Jesus, the author and finisher of faith." *Hebrews*, xii.

"He learned obedience by the things which He suffered: And being consummated, He became the cause of eternal salvation to all that obey Him." *Hebrews*, v.

"If a man live many years, and have rejoiced in them all, he

must remember the darksome time, and the many days: which, when they shall come, the things passed shall be accused of vanity." *Ecclesiastes*, xi.

HOLY THURSDAY.

Meditation.

ON THE LAST WORDS OF OUR LORD ON THE CROSS.

"*Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.*"

1st Point. Jesus abandoned himself to his Father after having been abandoned by Him. After showing us how to live He taught us how to die. He afforded us in his life divine lessons of patience, and has given us in his death an admirable and holy example of abandonment to the will, and confidence in the mercy, of God. Imitate Jesus living and dying. Rest in his arms. Commend your spirit into his hands. He is our Father: can He abandon us? He is our Saviour: will He condemn us?

2d Point. To die well it is necessary to live well. Say often to Jesus Christ what you would say if you were dying: "*Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.*" Thou art its First Cause, let it return to Thee as to its last end. It is the breath of thy mouth, the product of thy spirit, the price of thy blood, and the sanctuary of thy graces. Into thy hands, which were pierced for me, I commend it; and to thy sacred heart, which is ever open to receive sinners, I recommend it. Oh, sweet Jesus, take care of it, and abandon it not! Alas! if unsupported by thy hands it will fall into the power of thy adversary, the devil. Oh suffer not a soul, that has cost Thee such an infinite price, to be lost!

3d Point. Go forth, my soul, from this body which has been your prison. Why should you fear to die? In dying for you, Jesus has taken away the sting and bitterness of death. He recommended your spirit to his Almighty Father, when He recommended his own. Depart, then, Christian soul, in the name of the Father who created you, of the Son who redeemed you, of the Holy Ghost who sanctified you. Jesus invites you to the eternal rest of heaven.

Bow your head in obedience, and fear not; your soul is safe in the hands of Jesus.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"And bowing his head, He gave up the ghost." *St. John*, xix.

"And Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said: Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." *St. Luke*, xxiii.

"But God is our King before ages; He hath wrought salvation in the midst of the earth." *Psalm*, lxxiii.

"But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit." 1 *Cor.* vi.

GOOD FRIDAY.

Meditation.

ON THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST.

1st Point. Jesus died: who will fear death? Having died for us, who will refuse to die for Him? In his death He was consumed with grief: who will desire to die without suffering? By his death He redeemed us: who will serve any other master? He died for our sins: who will not endeavor to destroy and overcome sin?

Oh, good Shepherd, Thou hast given thy life for thy sheep! Oh, High Priest of the New Law, truly hast Thou immolated thyself for the salvation of thy people! Oh, divine Lord! Thou hast, indeed, taught us from the cross how great an evil sin is, since it caused Thee to die, and how infinite a good is that heaven which cost the life of the Son of God!

2d Point. Children of men, will you be always ungrateful! always blind? Do you know the price that was paid for you? Do you know what you owe? You owe your life to the Son of God, who has given his for you. What injustice, then, to give it to the world, the flesh, and the devil, which are your most deadly enemies. Did the enemy of souls die for you? Did the prince of this world and concupiscence shed their blood for you? Have they ever done you good? Can they ever do you good? Can they love you? Have they a heaven to offer you? My brethren, you belong, not to yourselves, but to Him who, in dying for you, paid an infinite price for your salvation.

3d Point. Oh, Jesus my Saviour, let me die with Thee, for Thee, and like Thee. I forgive all my enemies, and hope humbly Thou wilt be favorable to me, accept my desires, and graciously give me admittance into Paradise, as Thou didst the penitent thief. I declare myself a child and servant of thy holy Mother. Recommend me to her as Thou didst thy beloved disciple, and desire her to take care of me at the hour of my death. And I

implore Thee, oh Blessed Jesus, by thy abandonment on the cross, do not leave me when all the world abandons me. Sustain my spirit by thy grace when the strength of my body fails. Give me a great thirst and desire for Paradise. Cast thy eyes on the poor victim who is consumed with grief and suffering.

Oh, my Father! I abandon my spirit to Thee. I unite my last hour with that of thy divine Son. I wish to honor Thee by the sacrifice of my life. I accept death in acknowledgment of all the blessings I have received from Thee; I accept it to satisfy thy justice, which I have so often irritated; I accept it willingly as an expression of my love and obedience; I accept it that I may enjoy the bliss of possessing and beholding Thee; I accept it, finally, to honor thy Son and his most holy Mother, and to drink the same chalice which they have drained.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"And bowing his head, He gave up the ghost." *St. John*, xix.

"The just perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart." *Isaias*, lvii.

"For why did Christ die for the ungodly?" *Romans*, v.

"Christ died for us." *Ibid.*

"For to this end Christ died, and rose again; that He might be Lord both of the living and the dead." *Romans*, xiv.

"For you are dead: and your life is hidden with Christ in God." *Colossians*, iii.

HOLY SATURDAY.

Meditation.

ON THE BURIAL OF OUR LORD.

1st Point. They took Jesus from the cross. He descended from it only after his death, and through the obedience which He rendered to God his Father, and to those who detached Him from it. It was necessary for Him to remain there while He lived, to die there, and be taken down only after death. Should you not detach yourself from worldly things and be all to God? Ought you not to become like a dead body, that remains where it is placed, and never complains of what is done to it?

2d Point. Jesus was taken from the cross to the tomb. Behold the end of his works! Behold the place of his repose! Be-

hold the termination of his laborious travels! It was for this that He came into the world. After many sufferings you will also come hither, and find rest in the grave, if you have not enjoyed it in your life, and have died on the cross. The disciples almost lost hope; their charity was weak, if not quite dead; they were sad and downcast, because they were deprived of the sensible presence of their divine Master, and could neither see nor hear Him. Oh, how often this happens!

3d Point. When Jesus was taken down from the cross how eagerly his holy Mother received Him in her arms. But unutterable grief was blended with her consolation when she beheld Him covered with blood and wounds from his head to his feet! His sacred body was washed with her tears; his wounded hands, feet, and side were kissed with tenderness, awe, and anguish. His agonies were over, but the dolors of Mary continued. Her heart was wrung with new pangs when they took Him away to entomb Him. Her afflictions were increased by this separation. What did she say? What were her thoughts while gazing on this sad spectacle? She did not abandon herself to grief, or fall into impatience, but was resigned to the separation from that which was most dear to her, because it was the will of God. Imitate her example, suffer the loss of all that you most prize and love, and sacrifice every thing to the will of God, who orders all things for your good.

Happy is he who receives Jesus when He descends from the cross. The grain of mustard must die, and be buried in the earth, ere it can bring forth fruit. Jesus is on the altar as truly as He was on the cross: the altar is Calvary, your heart the sepulchre where He desires to rest after the great sacrifice of his love. It is the place He has chosen for his burial, and where He ought to be kept by a constant renewal of grace and penance. Joseph of Arimathea gave our Lord his sepulchre: will you refuse Him yours? Nicodemus brought sweet spices and new linen for his burial: oh it will be rendered precious and glorious for Him if you prepare the sepulchre with the rich perfume of humility and devotion! Oh, Christian soul, make ready for the burial of Jesus in your heart.

4th Point. Happy is he who is crucified and buried with Jesus, who is hidden on earth from the eyes of men, who is unknown, numbered as it were with the dead, and remembered no more; he will soon rise, with Jesus, immortal and impassible like Him. Happy is he who preserves his faith in the obscurity of the senses, who loses not his hope because all sensible support is

withdrawn, and who does not cease to love when deprived of all consolation.

Oh, Jesus my Saviour, Thou didst truly become a hidden God, being wrapped in linen, buried in a sepulchre, and numbered with the dead; hide me in thy bosom, let me be buried with Thee, let me no longer be esteemed or known among men, let me die to all my senses, and be separated from all my desires. I am ready to follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest, in company with Thee I have nothing to fear.

Hell, with Thee, would be heaven; without Thee, heaven would be hell.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"And Joseph, taking the body, wrapped it up in a clean linen cloth; and laid it in his own new monument, which he had hewn out of a rock." *St. Matt.* xxvii.

"Woman, why weepest thou? Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." *St. John*, xx.

"And Nicodemus also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes. They took, therefore, the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices." *St. John*, xix.

"My soul is filled with evils; and my life hath drawn nigh to hell." *Psalm* lxxxvii.

"I am counted with them that go down to the pit: I am become as a man without help, free among the dead." *Ibid.*

"They have laid me in the lower pit; in the dark places, and in the shadow of death." *Ibid.*

EASTER SUNDAY.

The Gospel. *Mark*, xvi. 1–7.

"At that time Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James and Salome, bought sweet spices, that coming they might anoint Jesus. And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came to the sepulchre, the sun being now risen. And they said one to the other: Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And looking, they saw the stone rolled back. For it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed with a white robe: and they were astonished. Who saith to them: Be

not affrighted: you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen; He is not here; behold the place where they laid Him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, that He goeth before you into Galilee: there you shall see Him, as He told you.

Meditation.

ON THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD.

1st Point. Jesus has risen. He has come glorious and impassible from the tomb, He is victorious over death, He has broken the gates of hell, triumphed over Satan, and stripped him of his spoils; terrified the soldiers who guarded the sepulchre, confounded the Jews, triumphed over his enemies, and enjoys at the present moment, a life of infinite glory. My soul, weep no more; Jesus will die no more in his body; take care that you do not make Him die in your heart.

2d Point. Jesus has risen in our souls, entered into the kingdom of our hearts and spirits, driven the devil therefrom, triumphed over our sins, which held us slaves, remained in us by his grace lived by his spirit, reigned by his love, and rested in peace. My soul, weep no more; Jesus has risen to a better life; He will die no more in his body; but be watchful lest you make Him die in your heart.

3d Point. All the Church has risen with Jesus; all its body has come from his sepulchre; all its members are reanimated by the spirit of penance; all who were spiritually dead have risen with Him; He has now only to give them the Paschal Lamb to eat. Woman, why weepest thou? Jesus is no longer dead in the sepulchre; He has risen to a new life; He will die no more in his body; but take care that your sins do not make Him die in your heart.

Oh, Jesus, divine Master! ascend not so soon into heaven; remain with us to strengthen our faith, hope, and charity; behold this holy Easter Sunday is nearly over, night approaches, the spirits of evil assemble and conspire against us, the lion cometh forth seeking my soul to devour it, my passions begin to revolt, my old habits revive, the world takes arms against me, and my flesh torments me with divers temptations. Oh, Jesus, thy life, within me is not in safety; they conspire thy death, and seek to renew thy sufferings. All the wicked and impenitent clamor together to drive Thee from the world, scourge and crucify Thee again. Defend thyself, oh my Saviour, and do not permit me to destroy thy life in my heart.

Oh, senseless Galatians! ungrateful Christians! know ye not that Jesus was crucified for you? You wept at the cross, and at his burial, and now that He has risen, you only think how you may renew his passion and deprive Him of life! You prepare the whips to scourge Him, thorns to crown Him, and a cross whereon to crucify Him! What has He done to merit such treatment? Is He criminal because He has loved you infinitely? Does He deserve death for having saved you from death eternal? My soul, weep no more, Jesus is risen; He will die no more in your heart, if sin does not crucify Him therein.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." *St. Luke*, xxiv.

"Knowing that CHRIST, rising again from the dead, dieth now no more, death shall no more have dominion over Him." *Romans*, vi.

"If you be risen with CHRIST, seek the things that are above; where CHRIST is sitting at the right hand of God." *Colossians*, iii.

"Mind the things that are above, not the things that are on earth. For you are dead: and your life is hidden with Christ in God." *Ibid.*

"Crucifying to themselves the Son of God, and making a mockery of Him." *Hebrews*, vi.

EASTER MONDAY.

Meditation.

ON THE BAD EFFECTS OF SADNESS.

1ST POINT. Jesus having met two of his disciples who were on their way into the country, and who were conversing with sorrowful countenances of all that had happened, He inquired the cause of their sadness.

A sad or melancholy person dishonors God. His despondency is expressive of a great want of confidence in his Creator; it arraigns his Providence, or accuses Him of injustice and want of knowledge. "It is I," says God, "who deprive you of this blessing; it is I who permit this persecution; it is I who visit you with affliction and sickness," and you presume to murmur and complain! You murmur not with your lips, but your heart is filled

with bitter rebellion against my decrees, and you say within yourself: There is no God, or if there be, He is unjust, or wants wisdom, or knows not how to govern his creatures.

2d Point. Persons of this class scandalize their fellow beings, inspire them with contempt and dislike for virtue and piety, and cause them to turn away from the service of a God who has no better reward for his servants than anxiety and gloom. They disturb the peace of families by ill humor and discontent. They are easily angered; and are a burden to their superiors, ill tempered towards their equals, and insupportable to their inferiors. Their conversation is bitter and without charity. They are displeased at all that happens; vexed if one laughs, sad if one weeps, and inconvenienced when one visits them. They are embittered and filled with contempt if they are abandoned to their own miserable society. All their senses and thoughts are sad. They set no bounds to, and have no control over, this dangerous passion.

3d Point. A melancholy person becomes lost to his true and better self. He is consumed with gloom and vexation. His heart is a hell, which is filled with despair and weeping; and hell being the abode of the devil, this dark and dissatisfied spirit has a right to enter therein and remain. Swiftly he seizes the occasion, and, taking possession, he soon urges the miserable heart, wherein he reigns, to despair, engages it in all manner of vices, and proposes to it every pleasure which is sensual and degrading, in place of those which are spiritual and heavenly. Oh mistaken man, who seeketh such a remedy to heal thy disorders, and cure thy diseased soul!

Oh Jesus! joy of angels and of men! Thou who didst reprove thy disciples for being sad, although they had so good a reason for being so; Thou who during thy mortal life wast never irritated, disquieted, or disturbed, although grief and tribulation were never wanting to Thee; abandon me not to this dangerous and insidious passion; though I may sometimes have cause for sadness, still I desire to rest my heart in Thee, knowing that Thou disposest of all things well. I wish, henceforth, to honor thy Providence by a resigned and contented spirit; to edify my neighbor by the peace of my heart and the serenity of my countenance; I wish to convince all the world that I serve the best of masters, and that I am happy in his service; I wish to begin my heaven in this life that it may continue after death. Should a servant of God be sad, gloomy, or discontented? Help me by thy grace, sweet Lord, that I may never be so.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"He shall not be sad nor troublesome." *Isaias*, xlii.

"As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." 2 *Corinthians*, vi.

"In every gift show a cheerful countenance, and sanctify thy tithes with joy." *Ecclesiasticus*, xxxvi.

"Be not as the hypocrites, sad." *St. Matthew*, vi.

"Why art thou sad, O my soul? and why dost thou trouble me?" *Psalm* xli.

EASTER TUESDAY.

Meditation.

ON PEACE OF SOUL.

1st Point. Jesus presented himself in the midst of his disciples and said to them: "*Peace be to you.*"

All men desire peace; it is the fruit of the resurrection of the Saviour. He imparted it to his disciples and to his Church. Why, then, is my heart so much and so often agitated and disquieted? Why is it that, having ardently desired peace, I do not possess it? It is, doubtless, because I submit too much to my senses, and am too much attached to my own will; or that I have rebelled against the guidance of my superiors, and have not submitted to the holy rule of obedience. It is because I do not wish to suffer, and entertain some secret desire that occasions this bodily fever; it is because I am ambitious and envious, and seek with too much anxiety my temporal interests.

2d Point. I am not at peace. Is it not because I wage war with God, resist his will, and oppose the order of his Providence? Am I not unwilling to submit to Him my understanding and judgment? Are not my wishes contrary to his designs, and my desires opposed to his law? Am I in the place, employment or state, wherein He designed me to be? Do I not frequently break his commandments, and departs from his ways?

3d Point. Who can be at peace that wages war with God? Who can be good within himself while separated from the grace of God? An arm that has been dislocated causes much suffering, even after being restored to its proper place. A stone removed from its centre continues unsteady, even after it is restored to that centre. You can never know peace, or be in the place or state in which God desires you to be, or co-operate with Him in

his designs for your salvation, unless you renounce your own judgment and will; desire nothing inordinately or with anxiety, detach yourself entirely from creatures, then only shall you enjoy a profound peace.

Oh, my soul! if you oppose yourself to God He will be against you; if you disturb the order of his peace He will destroy yours; if you submit to the divine order of his grace it will sustain and keep you forever. Desire nothing, and you shall have all; seek nothing, and you shall find all; do the will of God, and He will do yours; give Him all that He demands, and He will give you all that you need.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"He will do the will of them that fear Him." *Psalm* cxliv.

"From whence are wars and contentions among you? Come they not hence from your concupiscences?" *St. James*, iv.

"Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good will." *St. Luke*, ii.

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you: not as the world giveth, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid." *St. John*, xiv.

"Much peace have they that love thy law." *Psalm* cxviii.

EASTER WEDNESDAY.

Meditation.

ON SPIRITUAL JOY.

1st Point. It is the privilege only of good men to rejoice, because their conscience is void of guile, which is in itself, a perpetual feast, as the wise man says; because they have God abiding in their hearts, which is an unfailing source of consolation; because they are always in his presence, which is the paradise of heaven and earth; because they are under his almighty protection, which makes their peace and assurance; because they receive continual marks of his favor, by the blessings spiritual and temporal that He bestows on them; because they have evident signs of their predestination, and an almost certain assurance of salvation, which is of all things the most joyful and consoling. Ah! why, then, are you cast down? Do you doubt the goodness and mercy of God? Do you doubt the worth and efficacy of the blood of his Son?

2d Point. The joy of the wicked is false, shameful, vain, impure, and superficial; it is a joy which is sensual and embittered by sorrow and disappointments; it is short lived, fleeting and transitory, and its fruits are eternal tears and sighs. Oh, my God, it is in the order of thy justice that the sinner should find his punishment even in his sin.

3d Point. Good men are afflicted in this life; but it is in affliction that the true servant of God most rejoices, because he receives it as the true mark of his Father's love, which enables him to reciprocate that love by the faithfulness of his trust and the fidelity of his service. A friend is not proved by prosperity, but by adversity. God proves his well beloved. He leads them, like the soldiers of Gideon, to the waters of tribulation; but, after having tested their courage, their fidelity, patience, and love, He fills them with consolation, and forces them to cry out, with St. Francis Xavier: "It is enough, oh my God, it is enough."

But what higher honor can we desire than to suffer for Jesus Christ? What greater consolation than to receive pledges of our salvation, and participate in the griefs of so good a Master? It is this consideration which renders good men so contented amidst tribulation, so happy in their sufferings.

Are you a servant of Jesus Christ, you who weep, who murmur, who esteem yourselves miserable, when some misfortune befalls you, or when you are visited by affliction? Oh my God, how great and abundant is the consolation Thou dost reserve for those who love Thee! Sinners seek their consolation in sensual delights which perish, but for me, I will rejoice only in God my Saviour.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Rejoice in the Lord always: again, I say, rejoice." *Philip.* iv.

"Rejoice in this, that your names are written in heaven." *St. Luke*, x.

"Rejoice and be exceeding glad, because your reward is very great in heaven." *St. Matt.* v.

"This I know from the beginning, since man was placed upon earth. That the praise of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment." *Job*, xx.

"Wo to you that laugh now: for you shall mourn and weep." *St. Luke*, vi.

EASTER THURSDAY.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. The joy of good men is honorable to God, and a certain evidence to the world that they serve a benign and generous Master. Others in search of happiness, on beholding their contentment and joy, are led to choose the same service. The wicked look for it in the unrestrained indulgence of sensuality, until, finding themselves the slaves of a cruel tyrant who deceives them, and being won by the happiness of the children of God, they seek his service, and find that true peace of soul which passeth all human understanding.

2d Point. A servant of God, who is melancholy and despondding, dishonors his Master, disgraces his service, makes devotion repulsive, and inspires contempt for piety and virtue. His example has the bad effect of making sinners think that the yoke of the Son of God is insupportable, and that more is to be gained and enjoyed in the service of the devil than in his. Consider, oh base and unfaithful servant, all that He has done for you. Is this your gratitude, to renew his passion? Is He a tyrant? Are your desires for happiness so insatiable that God himself is not capable of satisfying you? Who, or what can content you if He does not? "Retire from my service," the Son of God will say to these scandalous Christians, "you are a burden and discredit to it. I honor my Father, and you dishonor Him. Ye are traitors to my interests, a scandal to my name, and I will that ye depart from the company of my faithful ones!"

3d Point. To possess this spiritual joy, it is necessary to have a good conscience and a heart detached from creatures; to abandon one's self to the Providence of God, and depend on his guidance; to desire nothing inordinately, but to be indifferent to all; to love sufferings, and have no other will than God's, and no other desire than to please Him; to fly from the pleasures of earth, and seek not the consolation of the senses, for sensual joy quenches all spiritual delights; to think always of God, the blessings we have received from Him, and the infinite reward He has prepared for us in his eternal kingdom.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"I set the Lord always in my sight: for He is at my right

hand, that I be not moved. Therefore my heart hath been glad, and my tongue hath rejoiced." *Psalm* xv.

My God, what consolation and joy it is to have Thee ever before me, and to know Thou art ever near me to sustain and comfort me!

"My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." *Luke*, i.

Does your soul glorify the Lord as did the Holy Virgin's? Does your spirit rejoice in God your Saviour?

"Rejoice in the Lord, O ye just: praise becometh the upright." *Psalm* xxxii.

It is only those who have an upright heart who are privileged to rejoice. If your heart is agitated by vexation, or filled with bitterness, and does not praise and give glory to God, it is evident that it is not right before Him.

"I am filled with comfort: I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation." 2 *Corinthians*, vii.

If you love God, as St. Paul did, you will rejoice in tribulation, and complain only of having so little to suffer.

EASTER FRIDAY.

Meditation.

HOW A SOUL MAY RISE PERFECT WITH JESUS.

1st Point. The first degree of perfection is to become as a pilgrim and sojourner on earth. Second, to suffer and be crucified with our Lord. Third, to die on the cross, and not be separated from it until after death. Fourth, to be buried with Him. Fifth, to descend with Him even into hell. Then those who have followed Jesus whithersoever He goeth will rise with Him, and enter into a state of peace and impassibility.

2d Point. The Christian pilgrim should not attach himself to objects he may meet in the way. He who is crucified cannot go where, or do, what he desires. Death feels nothing, and complains of nothing. We trample under foot the body that is in the earth. One is without consolation in hell. Consider in which of these states you are at this time, and whether you have died to rise a new and perfect life with Christ.

3d Point. Oh sacred nothingness, wherein the soul loses its being to be transformed into God! Oh living sepulchre, wherein

the just do penance in solitude! Oh gospel field, where the treasures of grace and peace are hidden! Oh living earth, wherein the grain dies, and is buried, to rise again!

Oh my God! in Thee alone dwell all sweetness and consolation. I would rather be with Thee, amidst infinite sufferings, than be in heaven without Thee. Oh sweet Jesus! if Thou wouldst always remain on earth, who would desire to exchange it for heaven? Oh that I may be of the number of those living dead, who rest in the tomb of their senses and passions, that, like them, I may rise perfect with Jesus!

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, to refrain yourselves from carnal desires, which war against the soul." 1 *Peter*, ii.

"With CHRIST I am nailed to the cross. And I live, now not I, but CHRIST liveth in me." *Galatians*, ii.

"For you are dead: and your life is hidden with Christ in God." *Colossians*, iii.

"Now if we be dead with CHRIST, we believe that we shall live also together with CHRIST. So do you also reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in JESUS CHRIST our Lord." *Romans*, vi.

"Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell." *Psalm* xv.

EASTER SATURDAY.

Meditation.

ON THE JOY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN ON BEHOLDING HER SON AFTER HIS RESURRECTION.

1ST POINT. Morning succeeds night; spring time, winter; calm, a tempest; rest, labor; life, death; consolation, grief and affliction. God condemns the wicked, after death, to a twofold degree of punishment in proportion to their works, to multiply their sufferings, and to plunge them in infinite woe as often as they formerly plunged in carnal delights. But it was the will of Almighty God that his Son should render to his Blessed Mother a twofold reward for her good works, and multiply her pleasures in proportion to the bitter sorrows she had endured; and, as she had been plunged into an abyss of grief, to plunge her into

a sea of joy. Oh, who can fathom this abyss? oh, who can measure it?

2d Point. Jesus appeared to his holy Mother. Was it not just that He should afford this consolation to her who had given Him life; to her who had assisted at his death on Calvary; to her who had loved Him above all creatures; to her whom He loved better than all mankind? If joy is measured by grief, who could be more consoled than she, who, beyond all others, had been the most afflicted? Who should have been the first consoled, if not she who first loved and suffered for Him, who loved her Son from the moment of his conception, and was pierced with a sword of grief forty days after his birth?

Oh, what an interview of joy this must have been! Oh, what heavenly discourse! Oh, what pleasure! Oh holy Virgin, oh happy mother of the newly risen Lord, when I remember all thy bitter dolors at the foot of the cross, I know that, without a miracle, thou must have died. But I am no longer amazed at that, since thou didst not die with joy when He appeared to thee after his resurrection.

3d Point. Why, oh my soul, do you weep, and why are you cast down at this season of rejoicing? Do you say that you are dead, that you are buried, that you are still in hell and without consolation on earth? Lift up your head and rejoice, you are going to rise with your Saviour, glorious, impassible, and immortal! Behold this little silk-worm, which, a moment ago, was buried in its shell, it is now risen; it was ugly and disgusting, it is now beautiful; it was black, behold it now as white as snow; it was heavy and crawled on the earth, but it is now light, it unfolds its wings and soars upwards. Behold how, ere long, you may be transformed and also arise. You are dead by penance and buried in labors, but the Spirit of God says: It is time to rest; He is going to wipe off your tears, and you are going to enjoy the fruit of your works.

Oh, most holy Virgin! oh, source of love and grief! I prayed thee, on Calvary, to let me take part in thy griefs; now, oh mother of sorrow and consolation, I supplicate thee to allow me to take part in thy joy. Dry my tears, disperse this sadness, and show unto me thy risen Son, that I may invite Him into my heart and hear Him say: "*Peace be unto you.*" Show me his wounds, remain with me, and never leave me.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"I shall be satisfied when thy glory shall appear." *Psalm* xvi.

"According to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart, thy comforts have given joy to my soul." *Psalm* xciii.

"In the evening weeping shall have place, and in the morning gladness." *Psalm* xxix.

"Arise, O my glory; arise, psaltery and harp: I will arise early." *Psalm* lvi.

FIRST SUNDAY IN THE OCTAVE OF EASTER.

THE GOSPEL. *St. John*, xx. 19–31.

"AT that time when it was late that same day, being the first day of the week, and the doors were shut, when the disciples were gathered together, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came, and stood in the midst, and said to them: Peace be to you. And when he had said this, he showed them his hands, and his side. The disciples, therefore, were glad, when they saw the Lord. And He said to them again: Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. When He had said this, He breathed on them: and He said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins ye shall forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose sins ye shall retain, they are retained. Now Thomas, one of the twelve, who is called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples, therefore, said to him: We have seen the Lord. But he said to them: Unless I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger in the place of the nails, and put my hands into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days, his disciples were again within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said: Peace be to you. Then He said to Thomas: Put in thy finger hither, and see my hands, and bring hither thy hand, and put it into my side, and be not faithless but believing. Thomas answered, and said to Him: My Lord, and my God. Jesus saith to him: Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed. Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing, you may have life in his name."

Meditation.

ON THE WOUNDS OF OUR LORD.

1st Point. For us the wounds of Jesus Christ are sources of light, strength and consolation; they enlighten our faith, sustain our hope, and increase our charity. Can we doubt the love of Jesus when we see his sacred heart wounded for us? Can we conceive the slightest distrust of our salvation, knowing that Jesus is our advocate with the Father? His wounds are so many mouths, by which He perpetually intercedes for us. The nails were the keys which opened this ark of our salvation. All the treasures that were therein enclosed are now ours; we can cancel our debts, and purchase heaven.

2d Point. Though risen, Jesus retains his wounds. Do not, therefore, be amazed if your soul, after your spiritual resurrection, still discovers its wounds and infirmities; it is no sin to feel them, but there is much merit in suffering them, provided it is done with humility and patience. Be impassible to your passions, stand firm in your temptations, shelter yourself in the wounds of your Saviour, when you are pursued and assailed by evil spirits; there you shall find a safe sanctuary, there you shall find exceeding peace.

3d Point. Jesus entered into the room where his disciples were, the doors being closed, and said to them: "*Peace be to you.*" When you shut the doors of your senses our most blessed Lord will enter into your heart and give you his peace, which passeth all knowledge. Blessed the day and the moment when Jesus shall enter into your heart, without passing the doors of the senses, spirit, reason, or imagination. It is what He does at the feast of the Lamb. Happy Thomas who put his hand into the sacred side of the Lord, but more happy he, who, in holy communion, receives from Him the kiss of peace; for one believed that only which he saw, the other believes what he has never seen. Exclaim, with Thomas, with all your heart, when you feel devotion, and meditate on his sacred wounds: "*My Lord and my God!*" But do not say, with him, "*I will not believe except I see, feel, and touch.*"

Oh, Jesus my Saviour, thy wounds console me; they assure me of thy love; they encourage me under affliction and temptation; they are a precious balm, which cures my wounds and rejoices my heart! Who will dare accuse me, knowing that Thou art my advocate? Who will condemn me, seeing that Thou art

my judge? Who will declare himself against me, knowing that Thou art my God and my Saviour, and will declare thyself for me?

Oh my Saviour! imprint these characters of love, these sacred stigmata, equally on my soul and body. Who would like to be, henceforth, without wounds, knowing the love Thou hadst for thine, which led Thee to retain them even in heaven? Who will find misery and grief in that which made the heaven of the saints? Oh, I cannot respect my heart if it is not wounded like thine; I cannot love my flesh, if it is not covered with wounds like thine.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"He showed them his hands and his feet." *St. Luke*, xxiv.

"He showed them his hands and side." *St. John*, xx.

"What are these wounds in the midst of thy hands? And He shall say: With these I was wounded in the house of them that loved me." *Zacharias*, xiii.

"Behold, I have graven thee in my hands." *Isaias*, xlix.

MONDAY AFTER THE OCTAVE OF EASTER.

Spiritual Canticle.

OF A SOUL THAT HAS FOUND PEACE.

1st Point. All my desire is, in desiring nothing; all my will, in wishing for nothing; all my care, in sighing for nothing; all my good, in possessing nothing.

2d Point. I have found the well-beloved of my heart; I will hold Him, and will not let Him go. I sought Him far away, and lo! He is here; I sought Him in tumult, and have found Him in silence; sought Him amidst the crowd, and found Him in solitude; sought Him in my mind, and found Him in my heart; sought Him by day, and found Him at night.

3d Point. He entered into my soul when all the doors were closed. He said: "*Peace be with you; be not afraid, it is I.*" I did not see Him, but I heard Him, and my heart felt his presence. He has filled me with joy; He has wiped away my tears; He has satisfied my desires, and filled me with delights. Happy are those who enjoy the rest of the saints! Happy are those who are invited to the marriage feast of the Lamb! Happy are those to whom the risen Saviour has given the bread of honey to eat!

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Now when it was late, that *same* day, being the first of the week, and the doors were shut, where the disciples were gathered together, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came, and stood in the midst, and said to them: Peace be to you." *St. John*, xx.

TUESDAY AFTER THE OCTAVE OF EASTER.

Meditation.

ON SINGULARITY.

1st Point. Thomas was singular. He withdrew himself from the society and community of the disciples. His sentiments were peculiar, and he was not disposed to yield to those of his brethren. He esteemed himself more wise than St. Peter and the rest. He continued in his wanderings and incredulity eight days. He would never have seen his risen Lord, if he had not returned to the community.

To be singular in opinion or sentiment indicates a proud, foolish, and vain heart; but to differ from the world in manners, or in the choice of a vocation, shows a wise and virtuous spirit. Peculiar or singular opinions, when indulged in, render persons heretical; but singular devotion of heart makes them perfect. It is necessary for Christians to believe as many, and live as few. To believe what all the faithful believe, but not to govern our lives by the example of all the faithful. To believe with them all that the Holy Church believes and teaches, and what we have always believed, is to be Catholic. But to live like those members whose lives do not correspond with the faith they profess, is not the sign of a good Catholic. Universality of belief is a mark of true faith; universality of conduct is not a mark of a good life, because vice is more common and general than virtue, and the wicked by far outnumber those who follow the footsteps of Jesus Christ.

2d. Point. A religious who seeks to be singular, is deprived of the graces of the community. Common observances are preferable to particular; the common are in the order of grace, and the particular far from it. Rules are the ways of grace established for our perfection; but such as are singular in their devotion or opinions are not, of necessity, recipients of grace. Irregular virtues are great only in the eyes of the world. Jesus appeared only

in the house where his disciples were. The Holy Ghost descended on them, when "*they were all together in one place, persevering with one mind in prayer.*" A member or limb separated from the body is without life or motion. If you separate yourself from the community, you will no longer have the community spirit, and you will not see the risen Saviour.

3D POINT. Be in the community, but do not imitate the lives or example of all the members thereof; keep the same observances and obey the same rules, but not as all do; do not distinguish yourself from the rest by external acts of devotion or mortification, but by interior spiritual acts; perform the common acts of your vocation with the rest, but not in a cold or common manner; let them be animated with more love, fervor, and a great desire for perfection. The Pharisee distinguished himself by exterior devotion, the Publican by interior; the one was reproved by our Lord, while the other was justified and blessed with his approbation.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Now Thomas was not with them, when JESUS came." *St. John*, xx.

"The Pharisee, standing, prayed thus with himself: O God, I give Thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men." *St. Luke*, xviii.

"If one fall, he shall be supported by the other; woe to him that is alone; for when he falleth, he hath none to lift him up." *Ecclesiastes*, iv.

"The boar out of the wood hath laid it (the vineyard) waste: and a singular wild beast hath devoured it." *Psalm* lxxix.

"I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost." *Psalm* cxviii.

WEDNESDAY AFTER THE OCTAVE OF EASTER.

Meditation.

ON THE ADVANTAGE OF BEING UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF GOD.

1ST POINT. Hear the words of God without argument, obey Him without murmuring, follow Him without straying from his sight, abandon yourself to the will of God without resistance, hope in God without doubting, rest in Him without disquietude, resign yourself to the divine Providence of God without fearing or desiring any thing, lose yourself in God without asking or refus-

ing any thing. This is the science of the saints, and the most perfect state that can be attained in this life.

2d Point. If you dispose yourself to listen to God, He will speak to you. If you do his will, He declares by the mouth of his prophet that He will do yours.* If you follow Him, you will not go astray. If you resign yourself entirely to his divine Providence, all will go well with you. If you trust in Him, nothing doubting, He will fill you with blessings. If you abandon yourself to Him, He will never abandon you in life or death, in time or eternity.

Oh my God! Thou art my wisdom, my consolation, and hope. I am safe only under thy protection. If I wander from thy care, the foe of my soul lies in wait to devour me, like a sheep that has gone astray from the shepherd. Oh do not, then, abandon me to the suggestions and devices of my own mind, but guide, govern, and lead me to heaven by the road which is best pleasing to thyself.

3d Point. Enlighten my footsteps, oh my God! If I go astray, lead me back. If I loiter on the way, or stand still, urge, press, and sting me, until I swiftly resume my journey. If I fall, raise me. If I am weak, strengthen me. If I am feeble, carry me. If I am attacked, defend me. If I am bewildered or lost, oh, in mercy, seek me until Thou findest me.

I submit myself joyfully to the guidance of thy wisdom; I rest on thy goodness, lean on thy strength, trust in thy mercy, resign myself to thy will, devote myself to thy service, abandon myself to thy love and Providence, in time and eternity.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Conduct me, O Lord, in thy way." *Psalm* lxxxv.

"Protect me under the shadow of thy wings." *Psalm* xvi.

"He will do the will of them that fear Him." *Psalm* cxliv.

"She (Wisdom) conducted them in a wonderful way; and she was to them for a covert by day, and for the light of stars by night." *Wisdom*, x.

"I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost: seek thy servant." *Psalm* cxviii.

"I am the light of the world: he that followeth me walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life." *St. John*, viii.

* "He will do the will of those that fear Him." *Psalm* cxliv.

THURSDAY AFTER THE OCTAVE OF EASTER.

Meditation.

ON THE EVILS OF STRAYING FROM GOD.

1st Point. Thomas was not where he ought to have been, hence his incredulity. He who forsakes the order of God's goodness enters into that of his justice. He who has not God for a friend has Him for an enemy. He who leaves the ways of his consolation enters into those of his severity. He who flies from his beneficent will falls under the effects of his powerful will. "*Know, then, and see, that it is an evil and bitter thing for thee to have left the Lord thy God.*"

2d Point. If I am in the place, state, or employment wherein God desires me to be, I shall find certain rest and security. It will be the care of his wisdom to govern me, his power to defend me, his goodness to console me, his grace to sanctify me, his mercy to encompass me, his sanctity to purify me, his happiness to defend me from evil and sustain me in good. All will succeed and go well with me according to my desire.

3d Point. If I am not in the place, state, or employment wherein God wishes me to be, all my steps will be wandering; the paths that I follow, perilous; my plans, illusions; my works, useless; my pleasures will become miseries; my prosperity, chastisement; my adversity and afflictions, despair. In fine, my existence will become a hell, wherein I shall only know bitter tears and sighs.

FRIDAY AFTER THE OCTAVE OF EASTER.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. If I am not where God desires me to be, I shall have no rest in my soul, peace in my heart, blessing on my works, consolation in my pain, succor in my combats, or assistance when I fall. I shall be abandoned to my passions, assailed by continual temptations, destitute of the grace of God, deprived of his protection, and under the malediction of his infinite justice. My life will be evil, and, like Cain, I shall become a slave. My expectations of a happy death will perish, and, as I have lived contrary

in all things to the desire and will of God, despair will attend my last hour, and be mine throughout eternity. "*Know, then, and see, that it is an evil and bitter thing for thee to have left the Lord thy God.*"

2D POINT. Am I where God desires me to be? Have I not strayed from the order of his Providence? Am I not mistaken in my vocation? Is it He who has given me this employment? Am I not intermeddling with an office of which I am ignorant? Does He desire me to be in this state of life? Do I acquit myself in a way well pleasing to Him? Do I not seek herein my own glory, satisfaction, and interest?

3D POINT. Oh my God! I desire most earnestly to abandon myself to the guidance of thy divine Providence, and to be governed by my superiors. Oh! what happiness can compare with that of knowing that we are in the state God desires us to be in; that we are suffering all that He sees good for us to endure! Is it not heaven to be always with Thee? Is it not hell to be far away from Thee, and at war with all thy designs? What is there more consoling than to be under thy protection? What more miserable than to be abandoned to our passions?

Oh merciful God! do not permit me to wander from thy ways and guidance. Bring me back if I go astray. Draw me by force if I am slothful in following Thee. Make me return to the order of thy goodness by the severe chastisements of thy justice. Make me repair by penance all that is wanting in my devotion, and recover my innocence by a holy love of mortification and penance.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"He that dwelleth in the aid of the Most High shall abide under the protection of the God of Jacob.

"He will overshadow thee with his shoulders: and under his wings thou shalt trust.

"His truth shall compass thee with a shield: thou shalt not be afraid of the terror of the night.

"There shall no evil come to thee: nor shall the scourge come near thy dwelling.

"For He hath given his Angels charge over thee; to keep thee in all thy ways." *Psalm* xc.

"Prove me, O God, and know my heart: examine me, and know my paths; and see if there be in me the way of iniquity: and lead me in the eternal way." *Psalm* cxxxviii.

SATURDAY AFTER THE OCTAVE OF EASTER.

Meditation.

ON THE HUMILITY AND MODESTY OF THE HOLY VIRGIN.

1st Point. Jesus manifested himself to the disciples in the place where they were assembled together. Why was not our Blessed Lady with them? It was because they were incredulous, and did not fully believe the news of the resurrection of Christ. It was that our Lord designed on this occasion to confer on them the power to remit sins. It was for this reason that no women were present. It was, also, to teach virgins to be modest and retiring, avoid the company of men, and to hold no conversation but what is absolutely necessary, even with saints.

2d Point. Mary was full of joy, but she did not go abroad to announce the resurrection of her Son. It is not the office of women to preach, and her doctrine would have been suspected. Holy and full of grace, Mary did not reprove the disciples on account of their incredulity, although she had it in her power to do so, because she knew that it did not belong to women to instruct prelates, and she felt assured that her divine Son designed to establish the belief of his resurrection on more certain and conclusive proofs than that of her testimony.

The Mother of our risen Lord, therefore, remained in solitude, silence and prayer, quietly awaiting the directions of her dear Son. It was thus she awaited the descent of the Holy Ghost, continuing in silence and prayer during ten days; but when she received Him, she did not go forth to instruct or speak publicly, but retired into the solitude of her own house to keep silence. Oh, what humility in a soul so full of grace!

3d Point. Speak often with God, and little with men. Do not undertake to guide, instruct, or direct any, except such as have placed themselves under your spiritual care. Conceal, like our Blessed Lady, all your glory within. If it is your vocation to write or speak, do it in God, for God, and to obey God. But St. Paul prohibits women from preaching in public places.

Oh my God, I am ashamed that I have attempted to teach that of which I am ignorant, and govern when I should have served. The Holy Virgin was full of wisdom and grace, and yet she uttered not a word; and I, who have neither grace, light, or knowledge, assume the office of instructing others, and am be-

come like a sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. I am barren of fruits, because I lack charity.

Oh Virgin, full of grace! give me part in thy abundance until my soul becomes the humble recipient of all heavenly virtues. It is thou who givest light and words to all preachers and writers, inasmuch as thou hast given us the light of the world, and the word of God. Oh, enlighten my spirit with this divine light; direct my tongue and my pen, and suffer not the instructions that I give others to become the cause of my judgment and condemnation.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"My heart hath uttered a good word: I speak my works to the King:

"My tongue is the pen of a scrivener that writeth swiftly." *Psalm* xliv.

"All the glory of the King's daughter is within in golden borders, clothed about with varieties.

"After her shall virgins be brought to the King: her neighbors shall be brought to thee.

"They shall be brought with gladness and rejoicing: they shall be brought into the temple of the King." *Psalm* xliv.

"Let women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted to them to speak; for it is a shame for a woman to speak in the church." 1 *Corinthians*, xiv.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

THE GOSPEL. *St. John*, x. 11–16.

"AT that time, Jesus said to the Pharisee: I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep. But the hireling, and he that is not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep and flieth: and the wolf snatcheth and scattereth the sheep: and the hireling flieth, because he is a hireling: and he hath no care for his sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know mine, and mine know me; as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father: and I lay down my life for my sheep. And other sheep I have, that are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice: and there shall be one fold and one shepherd."

Meditation.

ON THE GOSPEL OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

1st Point. Jesus is indeed the Good Shepherd. He knows his sheep in general, and in particular; He knows them as He is known to his Father; He gave his life for them; He calls them all by name; He leads them by the right, straight, and safe road; He holds over them a special Providence, which He has not for the rest of the world; He goes before them with his pastoral crook, which is the cross on which He died; He brings them back when they wander astray; He throws himself into the thorns that they may not entangle and wound themselves; He lifts them up, and bears them on his shoulders back to the safe shelter of his fold, instead of chastising and scourging them. To manifest his joy He makes a great feast to celebrate their return.

2d Point. Jesus is a good shepherd. He is a lamb in relation to his Father, and a shepherd in relation to men; He loves his sheep tenderly; He leads them into rich pastures where they eat, and are filled with delights; He gives them his flesh to eat, and his blood to drink; He instructs them by his word; He strengthens them by his grace; animates them by his spirit, and enriches them with his merits. What other shepherd would consent to feed his sheep with his body and blood?

3d Point. Jesus is a good shepherd. He gives his life for his flock; He does not, like other shepherds, nourish himself with their flesh, or clothe himself with their fleece; on the contrary, He stripped himself of all, even of life, to clothe them; He fasted all his life that they might be fed; watched unceasingly over them, and labored for them without rest, that they might know consolation and repose; He defends and protects them against the sanguinary foe who would devour them. When he prowls about the sheepfold and would enter, Jesus assists them in driving him off and saving their lives.

4th Point. Jesus is a good shepherd. He never abandons his sheep. He raises them up when they fall, and carries them on his shoulders when they are weak; consoles them when they are sorrowful, heals them when they are sick, raises them after death, and gives them eternal life.

Oh Jesus, Good Shepherd, how is it that so many of thy sheep become evil and stray wickedly, maliciously and deliberately, from thy guidance? They will not eat at thy table; thy flesh and blood are now insipid, dry, dangerous, and mortal for them. So

far from flying from the wolves who seek them they throw themselves into their power, and take great pleasure in their company. They become like them, devour their companions, and spare not even Thee. They destroy thy life, and tear Thee with more cruel rage than thy enemies.

Oh, my divine Shepherd! I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest; I will never wander from thy ways; I will accompany Thee as gladly to Calvary as to Thabor; I will descend with Thee even into hell. Oh, when wilt Thou conduct me to Mount Zion, where in celestial peace thy heavenly flocks repose? When shall I sing this beautiful canticle of the Saints in the New and heavenly Jerusalem. "*The Lord ruleth me, and I shall want nothing. He hath set me in a place of pasture; He hath brought me up on the water of refreshment. Thy rod and thy staff, they have comforted me.*"

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"And He took away his own people as sheep; and guided them in the wilderness like a flock." *Psalm* lxxvii.

"And I am not troubled, following Thee for my pastor." *Jeremias*, xvii.

"He goeth before them: and the sheep follow Him, because they know his voice." *St. John*, x.

"And seeing the multitude, He had compassion on them; because they were distressed, and lying like sheep that have no shepherd." *St. Matt.* ix.

SECOND MONDAY AFTER EASTER.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. Sheep love their shepherd. They hear and recognize his voice. They are in security as long as they follow him; but suffer great peril and loss when they leave him. The voice of the Shepherd is heard only in the Church; without, it is silent. Jesus Christ gave to St. Peter the charge of his flock. He, therefore, who refuses to hear and obey this shepherd, does not belong to the fold of Jesus Christ.

2d Point. Sheep do not reason; they go wheresoever the shepherd leads them, over paths that are rough and difficult, as well as those that are smooth and pleasant. They abandon themselves to his guidance, and fear nothing while he is present. It would be

most dangerous and imprudent to trust their own senses and judgment. The wise man always distrusts himself, because his understanding and motives are too closely associated with his own heart. "He who is master and director of himself," says St. Bernard, "is the scholar of a fool, and goes backwards instead of forward." They love their way and fall irrevocably, because they are without guide or director.

3D POINT. Sheep murmur not against their shepherd, or complain of his treatment or guidance, but submit to be stripped, bound, led to death, and slaughtered without resistance. The patience of God is necessary to bear with the impatience of mankind, who wish Him to suffer all, while they seek to avoid all suffering. Insupportable to themselves, they have no charity for the failings or impatience of others.

Oh, merciful Jesus! shall I be of the number of those who are saved? Shall I have a place at thy right hand or at thy left, when Thou comest to judge the world? Shall I be numbered with the sheep, or with the goats? Alas! how little do I love Thee, my good Shepherd! How seldom do I abandon myself to thy guidance! how continually do I murmur and complain against Thee! Is this being a sheep of thy fold? Are these marks of one of the predestined?

SECOND TUESDAY AFTER EASTER.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1ST POINT. Sheep do not injure or offend their companions. They are the most gentle and meek of all creatures. There is nothing aggressive or rough in their temper or ways. They hate singularity, love the society of their kind, seek unity, and take pleasure in community. Meekness and charity are signs of belonging to the fold of Jesus Christ.

2D POINT. Are you one of the flock of this divine Shepherd? Do you love and obey the chief shepherd that He has appointed to govern his flock on earth? Do you follow faithfully the ways of God? Do you abandon yourself without reserve to his Providence? Do you yield an humble and obedient submission to your superiors? Do you renounce your own understanding and judgment when they are contrary to faith and obedience? Do

you complain in your misfortunes? murmur amidst your pains? love your neighbor as yourself? assist him in his necessities? offend him by looks, words, or actions? Remember that charity and compassion for others, to minister to their wants, and cover their infirmities, are the true marks of your being one of the true fold of Christ.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Give ear, O Thou that rulest Israel; Thou that leadest Joseph like a sheep." *Psalm* lxxix.

"My foot hath followed his steps. I have kept his way, and have not declined from it." *Job*, xxiii.

"He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and He shall not open his mouth." *Isaias*, liii.

"By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." *St. John*, xiii.

"But if you bite and devour one another; take heed that you be not consumed one by another." *Galatians*, v.

SECOND WEDNESDAY AFTER EASTER.

Meditation.

ON HATRED TOWARDS OUR NEIGHBOR.

1st Point. A sheep does not hate its companions; neither should a disciple of Jesus Christ entertain feelings of aversion or contempt for his. Wounds of the heart are deadly. Hatred destroys charity. There is no victory more glorious than a triumph over the inclinations and prejudices of nature. To love a friend is a pagan virtue, but to love our enemy is a Christian virtue.

2d Point. To love an enemy, or an unamiable person, is the strongest, greatest, purest, most divine, and meritorious of all affections. Strongest, because he who loves his enemy cannot fail in love for his friend; pure, because God alone can inspire us with love for that which possesses no attractions or amiability; divine, because nature can only triumph over herself by loving those things which do not please her; meritorious, because there is nothing more difficult than to love against our inclinations. Examine and find out wherein your aversions and inclina-

tions lie, and in what manner you sustain the bonds of charity between your neighbor and yourself.

3d Point. God loves all that He has created. He has hatred only for sin. He has no natural antipathies, because his essence is infinite, and his charity without bounds. The very creatures who wage war against Him are objects of his love. Great souls have no enmities; they rise above prejudices, and are not moved by trifles, as are those who love only according to their inclinations. All is peace in the soul of him who is at peace with God and with his neighbor. But in the hearts of those who are not, there is nought but trouble and sin, because they are at war with charity. Are you in peace with all? or is your heart troubled with enmities and bitterness against your neighbor?

SECOND THURSDAY AFTER EASTER.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. Self-love makes great distinctions in its application; divine love makes none. Inclination has its bounds; charity is infinite. Love all things except sin. Love all creatures through charity, and you will resemble God, and, in the exercise of this love, your heart will become great and vast like his.

2d Point. Oh, how inexpressibly happy I should be if I had some certain sign that I love God, and was loved by Him! Behold the surest signs of all—if I love my enemies for his sake, if I am obliging to those who are disobliging to me, if I do good to those who do me evil, if I love those who hate me, and manifest affection for those whom my senses detest, I have every assurance that I can have, in this life, that I love God and am loved by Him. He loves me although I do not please Him, because I love those who displease me. He will pardon my sins if I forgive those who injure and offend me.

3d Point. Christian soul, have you ever loved God? Do you wish to be assured that you love Him in spirit and in truth? Love, then, without distinction, for his sake, your friends and enemies; those who please and those who displease you; those who are amiable and those who are not. Do good to them that do you evil; converse with them in whose discourse you take no pleasure; do not avoid the company of those whose presence it is difficult to endure. By these things you will know that you are

one of the fold of Jesus Christ; that you are his disciple, his child, his friend, because you love through charity and not through inclination; that you love God with all your heart, and act by grace instead of the impulses of nature.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"For if you love those that love you, what reward shall you have? do not even the publicans the same? And if you salute your brethren only, what do you more? do not also the heathen the same?" *St. Matt.* v.

"Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these, my least brethren, you did it to me." *St. Matt.* xxv.

"Their heart is divided; now they shall perish." *Osee*, x.

"Thou shalt not accept persons nor gifts." *Deut.* xvi.

SECOND FRIDAY AFTER EASTER.

Meditation.

ON THE IMITATION OF CHRIST.

"*He goeth before them: and the sheep follow him, because they know his voice.*"

1st Point. These are the words of Jesus Christ: shall we not believe them? Ought we not to follow our divine Shepherd, whose voice we know? His doctrine is the rule of our faith; his example the rule of our life; his words are infallible; his actions impeccable. I am a heretic in thought if I believe not the words of Jesus; I am a heretic in heart if I do not imitate the actions of Jesus. Are you a Catholic or a heretic? Examine closely your sentiments and way of life.

2d Point. I shall be perfect if I resemble Jesus, who is the rule of my perfection. I shall be dear to God if I am like Jesus, for He dearly loves all who imitate his divine Son. I will obey God in rendering myself like to Jesus, for He commands us to do so. I shall gain the approbation and love of God if I imitate Jesus, because nothing that I could do will be more pleasing and agreeable to his divine Majesty. I shall be saved if I am like Jesus, because all the predestined resemble Him.

3d Point. Oh, glorious honor and privilege, to live like a God; to speak like a God; to act, suffer, and die like a God! Do you imitate the example of Jesus Christ? Do you model your life

by his? When you speak, act, or suffer any thing, say in your heart, Is it thus that Jesus would speak? is it thus He would act? is it thus He would suffer? O, my God, aid me, under all circumstances, to follow the example of thy Son.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Make it according to the pattern, that was shown thee in the mount." *Exodus*, xxv.

"For whom he foreknew, he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son." *Romans*, viii.

"And every one that hath this hope in him, sanctifieth himself, as he also is holy." 1 *John*, iii.

"God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we may live in Him." 1 *John*, iv.

"For I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also." *St. John*, xiii.

"Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." *Romans*, xiii.

SECOND SATURDAY AFTER EASTER.

Meditation.

ON THE VIRTUES OF JESUS CHRIST CONTRASTED WITH OUR VICES.

1st Point. Jesus was poor on earth, and I covet riches; Jesus was humble, and I am proud; Jesus was meek, and I am passionate; Jesus suffered all, and I wish to escape suffering.

2d Point. Jesus pardoned his enemies, and I seek to be revenged on mine; Jesus was obedient, and I desire to command; Jesus was despised, and I wish to be loved; Jesus was treated with contempt, and I wish to be honored; Jesus lived a hidden life for thirty years, and I wish to be known and esteemed by men; Jesus was crowned with ignominy, and I wish to be crowned with glory; Jesus ascended into heaven by a way of many sorrows, and I wish to go thither by a way of joy and pleasure!

3d Point. Is it just that the servant should be treated better than the heir, or the guilty with more favor than the innocent? Should not the disciple imitate his Master, the child resemble his Father? How can you be assured of your salvation, unless you imitate the First of the Predestined? How can you say that you love Jesus Christ, when you war against his virtues, and follow none of his examples? What is there in your countenance like

his sweetness, patience and humility? Where is the image of Jesus that a Christian should wear? Where is his divine modesty with which a faithful soul should be clothed?

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Is thy heart right, as *my* heart is with thy heart?" 4 *Kings*, x.

"The disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his lord." *St. Matthew*, x.

"But of Him are you in CHRIST JESUS, who is made to us, from God, wisdom and justice, sanctification and redemption." 1 *Cor.* i.

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. *St. John*, xiv.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

THE GOSPEL. *St. John*, xvi. 16–22.

"At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: A little while, and now you shall not see me: and again a little while, and you shall see me: because I go to the Father. Then some of his disciples said one to another: What is this that He saith to us: A little while, and you shall not see me: and again a little while, and you shall see me: and because I go to the Father? They said, therefore: What is this that he saith? A little while? we know not what he speaketh. And Jesus knew that they had a mind to ask him; and he said to them: Of this do you inquire among yourselves, because I said: A little while, and you shall not see me: and again a little while, and you shall see me. Amen, amen, I say to you, that you shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice: and you shall be made sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman, when she is in labor, hath sorrow because her hour is come: but when she hath brought forth the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. So also you now, indeed, have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice: and your joy no man shall take from you."

Meditation.

ON THE GOSPEL.

1ST POINT. The time being near at hand when Jesus would leave the world, He made known his bequests, and divided his treasures equally among his children, some of whom were good and

some evil. He left joy to the wicked, and sorrow to the good. By this the designs of his wisdom and justice are apparent. The wicked do some little good on earth, for which they will not be recompensed after death. The good commit some sins in this life which merit chastisement. It is, then, just that the wicked should have some consolation in this world, as they will not have it in heaven; and that the just should be afflicted on earth, as they will be eternally consoled in heaven.

2D POINT. We go not from pleasure to happiness, from rejoicing to delights, but from happiness to misery, from delight to pain. Is it your aim to be happy in heaven? Why, then, do you seek the transitory happiness of the world? Can we be happy both in this life and in the life to come? The portion of the reprobate is worldly joy; the portion of the predestined is sorrow and tears. You desire to be of their number, and wish not to partake of their portion! You would escape the condemnation of the reprobate, yet desire to rejoice, be without suffering, and have no tribulation! Know that your wish is impossible.

3D POINT. The joy of the wicked is false, vain, fleeting; unworthy of the mind of man, and incapable of satisfying his soul. Its fruits are sorrow and eternal pain. The sorrrow of good men is short and apparent; it diffuses itself over the senses, but enters not into the heart, where God, who is the source of all joy, abides. The fruit of this sorrow is a joy in the depths of the soul, which the world can neither give nor take away. Which of these will you choose for your portion? All passes away; nothing is permanent on earth; neither pleasure, nor grief continue here forever. It is necessary to know and value that which is eternal, and which leads to eternity.

If there is any thing permanent here below, it is the joy of the good, which is founded on God, who is unchangeable. Their joy is pure, true, and holy. It fills the heart and satisfies the full capacity of the soul. The joy of sinners, as we have said, is brief and false, but their sorrow is without mitigation, and forever. They war against God: how can they know peace? They are possessed by evil spirits, agitated by passions, torn with desire, filled with disquietude, tortured by remorse of conscience, nd the fear of death: Where, then, I ask, is their felicity? *There is no rest for the wicked*, saith the Lord.

Oh, my God! my God! I am convinced that my heart is not right before Thee; that it seeks some other good, for I have no peace of soul; my conscience accuses, condemns, and scourges me. Neither day nor night can I find rest. The prospect of

death, the dread of judgment, and the fear of hell disturb and terrify my soul, and make me tremble with dark anticipations. Oh, how miserable is the soul that is at enmity with God, and dares to resist the All-Powerful! *Shall I be with this people*, saith the Lord, *when they withdraw from me?*

THIRD MONDAY AFTER EASTER.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. There is nothing truly great on earth; all is insignificant, all is unworthy the aims of the soul; all that the world most covets and prizes, endures only for a season, and is gone forever. Only the good, or those who, in spirit and in truth, are the true servants of God, know peace which is great, incomprehensible, and unalterable amidst all the troubles and difficulties of life. There is nothing in heaven, on earth, or in hell that can deprive them of it; if they lose it, they quickly recover it by penance. Happy is the soul to whom God is all, and to whom all that is not God is nothing.

2d Point. Jesus reveals himself for a little while to those who enter his service, to detach them from the false pleasures of the senses, and attract their love more strongly to himself; then He hides himself, and withdraws his consolations, to prove them, purify them, humiliate them, to make them understand their poverty and misery, and place a proper regard on his divine favors; to oblige them to pray with faith and seek Him with submission, that they may merit his graces. The soul, in the absence of Jesus, is sad and afflicted, but if it continues faithful He will console it. Like the disciples, it rejoices on seeing the Lord, and having learned wisdom by the vicissitudes it has experienced, disposes itself to lead an interior life, and love God purely without attaching itself inordinately to his consolations. How do you conduct yourself in the absence of Jesus? You are faithless; you are sensual; you are attached to creatures, and derive your happiness from them; you love the gifts more than the giver; the light more than the sun; the stream more than the fountain.

3d Point. Oh my soul, why are you sad, and why are you disquieted within me? The world hates you. Does it not hate Jesus? You are poor: did He not live in poverty? You complain that you have no peace; it is, then, evident that you love

something, or some creature more than Jesus. If you have no consolation on earth, why do you not seek it in the heart of Jesus Christ? He has retired from you only for a season, but He will soon return. The shortest time seems long to those who truly love Him and enjoy his presence. The constant watchwords of a true lover of Jesus are: To act or to suffer, to glorify God or to die.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy lifetime, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." *Luke*, xvi.

"As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." 2 *Corinthians*, vi.

"Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that worketh evil." *Romans*, ii.

"The wicked are like the raging sea, which cannot rest, and the waves thereof cast up dirt and mire." *Isaias*, lvii.

"For a small moment have I forsaken Thee, but with great mercies will I gather Thee." *Isaias*, liv.

"In a moment of indignation have I hid my face a little while from thee, but with everlasting kindness have I had mercy on thee, said the Lord thy Redeemer." *Isaias*, liv.

"So also you now, indeed, have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice: and your joy shall no man take from you." *St. John*, xvi.

THIRD TUESDAY AFTER EASTER.

Meditation.

ON THE CAUSES OF SADNESS.

1st Point. Why are you sad? It is doubtless because your soul is diseased or agitated by some passion, or that you love some creature more than God, or are possessed of some inordinate and cherished desire, or your conscience is not in a good state, or that you have committed sin and fear the penalty thereof.

2d Point. Why are you sad? It is because you are displeased with suffering; it is because you desire things which are impossible, or aspire after that which is beyond your reach. It is because you do not wish to be subject to the will of God, and oppose yourself to Him by desiring those things which are contrary to it. It is because you make war with God that He withdraws from you his peace and consolation.

3d Point. Why are you sad? It is because you yield too easy an obedience to the tyranny of your senses, and are too much attached to earthly pleasures. It is that you place too high a value on the opinions of the world; love a luxurious and happy life, and are too careful of yourself. It is because you are wanting in faith, and count as nothing the eternal joys of heaven. It is that you do not love God; that you are proud, and imagine yourself to be the cause of all the good that you have received. It is because you believe that you do not merit chastisement, though you have a thousand times merited hell, where you would be at this moment if God had not in his infinite mercy preserved you therefrom.

O my God! he who desires only Thee is happy; he who fears only Thee is content; he who is right with God is safe; he who possesses God is rich; he who is filled with God knows peace, which is a foretaste of heaven.

Love only God. Esteem as lost all that you can lose; value only that which cannot be taken from you; attach yourself to nothing that can perish, or whose deprivation can afflict you. Love aright, and you shall never be sad; abandon yourself to God, and your soul shall always be filled with contentment and tranquillity.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Sadness hath killed many, and there is no profit in it." *Ecclesiasticus*, xxx.

"Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice ye just, and glory all ye right of heart." *Psalm* xxxi.

"Rejoice in the Lord, O ye just: praise becometh the upright." *Psalm* xxxii.

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice." *Philippians*, iv.

"As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." 2 *Corinthians*, vi.

THIRD WEDNESDAY AFTER EASTER.

Meditation.

REMEDIES FOR SADNESS.

1st Point. Why do you afflict yourself? That which seems to you a misfortune, or evil, is not truly so. Your miseries are the mercies of God; your ignominies great graces. They detach you from the world, unite you to Jesus Christ, and cause you to

enter strictly into yourself; they disgust you with life, and inspire you with a horror for sin through the pain that it has caused you to suffer. They are the marks of your salvation, the pledges of your predestination. Did not God love his only Son? And who, of all the children of men, has ever suffered as He did?

2d Point. Why do you afflict yourself? Your calamity is not to be feared. If it is small, it is easy to support; if it is great, it will not continue. An evil which is violent has no duration; if it is not driven elsewhere it must necessarily yield. It can no more than triumph over life or reason. Hell is the only lasting and eternal evil to be feared. Your affliction or evil cannot accompany or disturb you beyond this life. What is life, and *all* its evils, compared with the duration and rewards of eternity?

3d Point. Why do you afflict yourself? Do you expect to live without pain or labor? How can you be a member of the thorn-crowned head of Jesus without suffering? how can you hope to reign with Him if you are not afflicted like unto Him? Show me a man without his cross, and I will, yes, I will relieve you of yours. Is it just that you should have, without price, that which has cost the saints so much blood, so much penance, so many tears? In what rank will you be in heaven? in what order will you be placed? All the saints are covered with wounds: would they suffer in their glorious army the presence of one without a single sign of conflict?

Think of heaven, and your sadness will be dissipated. The hope of a great good is fruitful of great joy. All tribulation and sorrow are small which result in an eternity of happiness; all griefs and trials are light which deliver us from an eternity of pain. The body is almost insensible to grief when the soul ascends into heaven. Know you not that heaven is the inheritance of the afflicted, the kingdom of the crucified, and the reward of their sufferings?

THIRD THURSDAY AFTER EASTER.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. Do you desire to be no longer sad? Banish sin from your soul. It is that which causes the misery and sorrow of the damned; it is that which makes their hell. If they were without sin they would be exempt from all sadness. What joy can those expect to possess who have driven God from their

hearts? what ease can he know who has swallowed poison, and is unable to eject it? Attach yourself to nothing, and nothing will afflict you. We suffer in proportion as we love. Our desires are our executioners. We cannot separate ourselves without much pain from the possession of that which is most dear to our hearts. Examine and see what object it is that your affections are so inordinately set on, and you will discover the cause of your torment.

2d Point. Do you desire never to be sad? Place all your hope in God; expose to Him your pains and afflictions; persevere in prayer; ask Him either for consolation or patience according to his pleasure; abandon yourself to his Providence; submit to the order thereof; conform yourself to his holy will. Be convinced that all He does is for your great and eternal good, and that which appears to you an affliction is in very truth a grace and blessing, and your sadness will be dispersed.

3d Point. Be guided by wisdom, and discipline your imagination. Men are frequently miserable because they imagine themselves to be so. An affliction is more easily endured when error and opinion do not increase it. It is opinion and its prejudices which constitutes the trouble of all men. If you desire contentment, consult reason and not opinion; regulate yourself by faith, and not by your senses.

4th Point. You fear an evil which only threatens you. This is truly afflicting yourself without reason; the evil is only in prospect, and may never approach you. You still weep over evils that are passed and gone: will your tears deliver you? Is it necessary to continue miserable because you have been so? Shame on a wise man who is dejected because he is weary of weeping! It is better to abandon grief than to wait for it to abandon us.

Regard the past no longer; look not yet into the future; the present, which is but a moment, is all that we can claim. Why, then, are you so indefatigable in prolonging your grief? A wise man accommodates himself to those ills which he can neither help nor avoid. Sadness increases the pain of our losses, but never repairs them. It is not necessary to afflict ourselves on account of past sins, if we have truly repented of them.

Oh, we shall be happy, indeed, if we hold the reins of our thoughts. We shall be filled with an exceeding joy, if we desire nothing on earth. We shall offer an acceptable sacrifice to God, if we sacrifice our most cherished desire to his divine will. A good man is always contented, because he desires nothing beyond the state, possessions, or condition in which God has placed him.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why dost thou disquiet me?" *Psalm* xli.

"Whom when the Lord had seen, he had compassion on her and said to her: Weep not." *St. Luke*, vii.

"Rejoice in the Lord always." *Philippians*, iv.

"Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord." *Psalm* civ.

"Is any of you sad? Let him pray. Is he cheerful in mind? Let him sing." *St. James*, v.

THIRD FRIDAY AFTER EASTER.

Meditation.

ON THE GRIEF AND PERSECUTIONS SUFFERED BY GOOD MEN.

1st Point. Good men persecute you? Examine your conscience. The wicked persecute you? Rejoice. If the good persecute you, there is reason to fear that you are wicked; if the wicked persecute you, there is cause to believe that you are good. It is impossible to please both God and man; to be loved at the same time by the good and the bad. If I desire only to please men, I must of necessity displease Jesus Christ; if I am hated and persecuted by the wicked, I am loved by Jesus Christ.

2d Point. Persecution is not pleasing or agreeable to us, but it is useful and necessary; it urges us heavenward when we loiter and stop on the road; it detaches us from creatures, the love of whom separates us from the love of God; it sustains us in our duty, purges us of our vices, strengthens our virtue, disgusts us with this life, resigns us to death, prevents our going astray, and makes us retire within ourselves.

3d Point. Would you have attached yourself to the service of God if the world had loved you? Would you have returned to God if the world had not driven you? It is the Father of mercy who governs his creatures; it is He who withholds worldlings from embracing you; He who directs them to send you back to Him, to give you a cold welcome, to turn their back on you, and despise you. He arms the world against you, that you may seek refuge in Him; He sows thorns in your way, that you may not seek your rest and consolation on earth. He does not desire the sin, but it is his will that you should suffer the effects thereof. He hates the persecutor, but loves the persecuted.

Oh my God! thy wisdom is admirable, and thy ways full of goodness and mercy. If the world had received and flattered me, I should not have been thine; if it had not opposed me, I should have been at war with Thee. Oh, I thank it for its hatred! I am obliged to it for having driven me to the shelter of thy infinite love. Oh, thou hast been mercifully severe! Thou hast persecuted me most sweetly and lovingly.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Fill their faces with shame: and they shall seek thy name, O Lord." *Psalm* lxxxii.

"Lord, they have sought after Thee in distress." *Isaias*, xxvi.

"Behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns." *Osee*, ii.

"And she shall follow after her lovers, and shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, and shall not find; and she shall say: I will go, and return to my first spouse, because it was better with me then than now." *Ibid.*

"You shall be hated by all nations for my name's sake." *St. Matth.* xxiv.

"Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake." *St. Matth.* v.

THIRD SATURDAY AFTER EASTER.

Spiritual Canticle.

OF A SOUL RESTORED TO GOD BY PERSECUTION.

All my glory is in being despised for Thee;
All my riches is in possessing only Thee;
All my pleasure is in enduring much sorrow for thy sake;
My life is revivified by a new and better life.
Am I still myself?
No; I am not what I was.
My God and I are now one soul, one heart, and one spirit!

All my desires are destroyed;
My worldly hopes vanished;
My will extinguished.
My being, O God, is nothingness;
I live only for Thee;

I labor only for Thee;
I desire only Thee;
I subsist only in Thee.

Thou art in me, and I in Thee;
Thou art with me, and I with Thee;
Thou art for me, and I am for Thee;
Thou art all to me, and I am thine.

To be where Thou desirest me to be,
To accomplish thy most holy will,
To suffer all things for the love of Thee,
Is the true science of joy and perfection!

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"I count all things to be but loss, for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things." *Philippians*, iii.

"With Christ I am nailed to the cross; and I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me." *Galatians*, ii.

"That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one in us." *St. John*, xvii.

"For what have I in heaven? and besides Thee what do I desire on earth?" *Psalm* lxxii.

"For you are dead; and your life is hid with Christ in God." *Colossians*, iii.

"For in Him we live, and move, and be." *Acts*, xvii.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

THE GOSPEL. *St. John*, xvi. 5–14.

"AT that time Jesus said to his disciples: I go to Him that sent me; and none of you asketh me: Whither goest thou? But because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow hath filled your hearts. But I tell you the truth: it is expedient to you that I go: for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you: but if I go, I will send Him to you. And when He is come, he will convince the world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believed not in me; and of justice, because I go to the Father: and you shall see me no longer: and of judgment, be-

cause the prince of this world is already judged. I have yet many things to say to you: but you cannot hear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will teach you all truth; for He shall not speak of himself: but what things soever He shall hear, He shall speak: and the things that are to come, He will show you. He shall glorify me; because He shall receive of mine, and shall show it you."

Meditation.

ON THE GOSPEL.

1st Point. "*But I tell you the truth: it is expedient to you that I go: for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you: but if I go, I will send Him to you.*" 1st. It was necessary that our Lord should ascend into heaven, to send us the Holy Ghost, for effusion is the effect of plenitude. Jesus Christ did not enjoy the fulness of his glory on earth, since his bodily presence was not where it most abounded; hence He did not make a final distribution of his gifts, and, greatest of all, of his Holy Spirit, until He entered into the plenitude of the majesty and power of his eternal kingdom. 2d. Those who give are generally greater than those who receive; and those who dispense liberally and profusely their treasures, are necessarily above the recipients thereof. Thus the Son of God was exalted above all his creatures, in order to bestow on them the treasures of his bounty, and the infinite blessing of his grace. 3d. It was necessary that mankind should be convinced that our Lord had, in reality, ascended into heaven. They were assured of this, by the descent of the Holy Ghost; because He had told them, that when He went thither, He would send the Paraclete to comfort them.

2d Point. The apostles could not receive the Holy Ghost while Jesus Christ was with them, because they loved Him too tenderly, and too much through the medium of the senses, to have been resigned to the loss of his presence. Alas! what means it, that this Divine Spirit condescends to visit a soul soiled with thoughts of impurity, and attached too closely to the love of filthy and corrupt creatures? If the hearts of the apostles were not pure enough to receive the Spirit of Infinite Purity, how can He abide in a soul which is a slave to its body, and prostituted by infamous passions? "*My Spirit,*" saith God, "*remains not in man, because he is under the dominion of the flesh.*"

3d Point. It was necessary, then, that the Son of God should

withdraw from the company of the apostles, to prepare and render them capable of receiving his Holy Spirit. It is also useful to us to be, at certain seasons, deprived of his sensible presence, and abandoned to dryness and aridity, to exercise our faith, exalt our hope, purify our love, preserve us in humility, make us feel our misery, weakness, and nothingness, and render us fit to receive the Spirit of God, who can remain only in that soul which is not attached to some pleasure of the senses.

Ah, why is it that our hearts are troubled when this occurs? Why do we despond, and think God is angry with us? When Jesus Christ left his disciples, was it a sign of his displeasure? How can you receive the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, if your heart is occupied with an attachment to creatures? Your sadness, and evident disquiet, prove that you depend too much on sensible consolations.

O, my God! purify my soul to become the abode and sanctuary of thy Spirit. Deprive me of all that would prevent his coming. I offer Thee my will, memory and understanding. All that I am, or have, I received from Thee, and unto Thee I return them. Bestow on me thy Holy Spirit, it is all that I desire. I ask no other riches, no higher honor, or greater joy.

FOURTH MONDAY AFTER EASTER.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. All that God does is expedient and necessary for us. It is good and advantageous for us to be poor, afflicted, persecuted; to be humiliated, sick, and subject to many infirmities. Our hearts are sorrowful, when we are afflicted or suffering, but Jesus Christ declares that tribulation is useful and necessary for our salvation.

2d Point. It was good that He made himself man; was born in a stable; lived in the midst of labors; died on a cross; arose from the dead; ascended into heaven, and sent his Holy Spirit to console us. Oh, what a blessing and happiness for us that He remained on earth in the holy sacrament of the Eucharist! It is expedient and necessary that He should often bestow himself on us, visit us, console us, nourish us, heal us, and strengthen us in temptation. Pray Him to send you his Divine Spirit, now that

He has ascended into heaven, and you are deprived of his sensible presence.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"He that descended is the same, also, that ascended above all the heavens, that He might fulfill all things." *Ephesians*, iv.

"And Sion said: The Lord hath forsaken me, and the Lord hath forgotten me." *Isaias*, xlix.

"Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee." *Ibid.*

"God is a spirit: and they that adore Him, must adore Him in spirit and in truth." *St. John*, iv.

FOURTH TUESDAY AFTER EASTER.

Meditation.

ON THE CONDEMNATION OF THE WORLD.

1st Point. And when He is come, He will convince the world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment. The world is worthy of reproof. Those who are of it commit sins without end; they perform no good works, and are under the dominion of the devil, who is the prince thereof, and who is already judged and condemned.

Sins in the world!—It subsists only in and by evil. The concupiscences of the flesh, the concupiscences of the eye, and the pride of life are what compose it. All its opinions are errors; its maxims, heretical; its customs, impieties; all its laws, injustices; all its desires, criminal; and its actions, scandals. Do you wish to be of this world?

2d Point. Those who are of the world do no good or meritorious works. They do not adore God therein, but speak of Him only to blaspheme Him; they despise his word, profane his temple, oppress his poor, instead of assisting them, and have respect and consideration only for the rich; they do not mortify the flesh, combat with their passions, do penance, or seek any higher or better aim than their own sensual pleasures. Religion they regard as superstition, the gospel as folly, innocence as stupidity, and mercy as something base and hypocritical; all virtues are cried down; all vices are canonized, and all that is

evil is glossed over and excused! And do you, Christian soul, love this world? Do you wish to be of it?

3d Point. The world is judged and condemned because Lucifer, its prince, is judged, and a reprobate. Jesus has cursed the world, and cut it off, with its abominations, from his Church; He declares himself against it, and threatens those who follow it with sudden death and eternal pains. And can it be that, after this, you still love the world, and wish to be numbered with its children?

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Wo to the world because of scandals." *St. Matt.* xviii.

"Now is the judgment of the world." *St. John*, xii.

"I pray not for the world." *St. John*, xvii.

"If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him." 1 *John*, ii.

"Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of this world, becometh an enemy of God." *St. James*, iv.

FOURTH WEDNESDAY AFTER EASTER.

Meditation.

USEFUL CONSIDERATIONS TO DETACH US FROM THE WORLD.

1st Point. Who created and placed me in the world? For what purpose, and to what end, am I here? What have I to do? Can I hope for rest in the world? When shall I go hence? What shall I wish to have done, when I leave this world?

2d Point. Is it necessary for me to lose my soul for the pleasures and vanities of this world? If I lose my soul, what will it avail me to have gained the world? And yet, notwithstanding all this, my thoughts are all for this world; I work only for the delights and deceptive pleasures of this world, and act, in all things, contrary to the designs and commands of God.

3d Point. O my God, either take me from this world, or detach me entirely from it; make the world die in me, or make me die to the world; separate my soul from my body, or detach it from the love of the world.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"What will it profit a man to gain the whole world, if he lose his own soul?" *St. Mark*, viii.

"You are of this world: I am not of this world." *St. John*, viii.

"Just Father, the world hath not known Thee." *St. John*, xvii.

"For the Prince of this world cometh, and in me he hath not any thing." *St. John*, xiv.

"The world hath hated them because they are not of the world: as I, also, am not of the world." *St. John*, xvii.

FOURTH THURSDAY AFTER EASTER.

Meditation.

ON HATRED OF SIN.

1st Point. *And when He is come, He will convince the world of sin.* The Holy Ghost rebukes all who sin. It is his office to reprimand them, because He is sent as our guide and teacher; and, being holy by nature, He entertains an infinite horror for sin. He is the Spirit of Truth, and cannot connive at our faults; He is the Spirit of Divine Love, from whence proceeds all the reproofs and admonitions which God gives us in this life. Why, then, do you complain? Why murmur when, through the inspirations of truth and love, you are chastised, reproved, or chidden?

2d Point. Have you ever committed a mortal sin? The Holy Ghost has then reproached you for your ignorance, injustice, ingratitude, treachery, pride and malice. Has He not reason to do so? What have you done? Offended an Infinite Majesty; outraged a God, whose perfections are infinite; sought to destroy an infinite blessing; committed an act of infinite injustice and ingratitude; perpetrated a deed, the malice of which is infinite! Hence, you deserve to suffer infinite pain. And, notwithstanding all this, you still continue to be vain, foolish and worldly; you complain of the light chastisements that God visits you with; you do no penance for the innumerable sins that you have committed; you neither enter into yourself, nor search your conscience, but cry out, what have I done?

3d Point. God hates sin with all the strength of his infinite nature. He hates it as much as He loves his Son. He, then, hates it infinitely; hates it necessarily; hates it essentially; hates it only, and hates it eternally. And you, do you love sin? You love it more than you do God; you love it infinitely; you love it without restraint; you love it exclusively, and wish to love it eternally.

O my God! show me mercy, for I am convinced of my sin; I

now perceive the malice that I was before unconscious of; I know the evil that I have done, and the hatred Thou hadst for it; the pain that it merits, and the ruin it brings. Oh, miserable wretch that I am, what have I done? If I had been possessed of the power, there would no longer be a God on earth; for I have, all my life, endeavored to defeat and drive Him hence. Why, O my God, dost thou still suffer me to cumber the earth? Why dost Thou not annihilate one who has so maliciously worked and contended against Thee? Only thy infinite goodness and patience could bear with a sinner so ungrateful and wicked as myself.

Oh, I truly desire to change my life; I wish to do penance for my sins. I will henceforth hate sin as much as I ought to hate it; hate it as much as I ought to love my own soul; as much as I ought to love God. I will hate it exclusively; hate it infinitely; hate it necessarily; hate it continually, and hate it eternally.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"The Highest hateth sinners, and will repay vengeance to the ungodly." *Ecclesiasticus*, xii.

"What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the earth." *Genesis*, iv.

"O God, be merciful to me, a sinner." *St. Luke*, xviii.

"But the soul that committeth any thing through pride, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, (because he hath been rebellious against the Lord,) shall be cut off from among his people." *Numbers*, xv.

"But to God the wicked and his wickedness are hateful alike." *Wisdom*, xiv.

"What fruit therefore had you then in those things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of them is death." *Romans*, vi.

FOURTH FRIDAY AFTER EASTER.

Meditation.

ON THE MALICE OF SIN.

1st Point. *Sinner*, the Holy Ghost will reproach you for having offended God your Father, who has given you being, who has preserved you; who has placed you in this world that you may render yourself eternally happy in the world to come, and who loves you so tenderly, that He has given his only Son, and deliv

ered Him up to death for you. You have offended this all-powerful God and charitable Father, without reason or justice; you have declared yourself the enemy of Him who loves you infinitely; you turn his own good gifts against Him in an unnatural warfare; you prefer Satan to the Lord of all; you serve your enemy rather than God, who is your best friend; you make choice of the prince of evil for your sovereign, and number yourself with his subjects, even while God preserves your life, loads you with blessings, visits you with his graces, and bears with your derelictions with infinite patience!

2D POINT. *Sinner*, the Holy Ghost will reproach you for having caused the death of JESUS your King and your Saviour. It was your sins that made Him die; it was to expiate them that He suffered so much grief and so many opprobriums. He would die again, if it were necessary for your salvation. As often as you sin, you crucify Him anew in your heart; you renew the ignominy of his passion; you dishonor and afflict Him incomparably more than the Jews did, who knew Him not as you know Him, and who had not received the same blessings that you have. He was satisfied to lose his corporal life on the cross, for your salvation, but desires not to die spiritually in your heart. He loves his spiritual life, and prefers it to that of the body. "*What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the earth.*"

3D POINT. *Sinner*, the Holy Ghost will reproach you for having outraged his divine person, and for having grieved Him and stifled his inspirations in your heart; for He is there by grace, as in a sanctuary, and would abide there, but that you drive Him away by your sins; you profane this temple which He has consecrated by baptism, and raise on its altar an idol whom you adore. He is espoused to your soul by grace, and you violate this union; you separate yourself from Him to prostitute yourself to the devil, and the love of perishing and evil creatures. He lives by grace in your soul, and the bond is as close as that which unites your body and soul together, yet you dissolve this divine union by sin, and destroy his life in your heart; you outrage this Spirit of grace; you irritate this Spirit of love; you put to death this Spirit of life!

FOURTH SATURDAY AFTER EASTER.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. *Sinner*, the Holy Ghost will reproach you for your injustice to yourself, for you do yourself greater evil than all men on earth, or all the devils in hell could do you, for you lose God whom you possessed, and incur his disfavor and hatred; you are no longer under his protection, as you were before; all with whom you are associated find it difficult to bear with or serve you; you inflict a mortal wound on your soul; you deprive it of that divine life which it had by grace; you strip it of all its treasures and merits, and reduce it to the last extremity of poverty; from being a child of God you become a child of the devil; from being an heir of heaven you become an heir of hell. Oh, miserable change! oh, infinite loss!

2d Point. *Sinner*, the holy Ghost will charge and upbraid you with the sin that you have committed in the presence of God—a sin that He will always have before his eyes, and that He will detest through all eternity, although He may pardon you; a sin that you will never be sure, in this life, is remitted, whatever penance you may do; a sin that will draw on you infinite evils, bodily and spiritual, and which, perhaps, may be the last that you will ever commit.

3d Point. O divine Spirit, I thank Thee for chiding and reproaching me for my sins, and showing me the malice thereof. Alas, I did not know the extent of the evils of sin! Oh, my God! what have I done? How shall I repair the evils I have committed? I have only one means of escape, and that is penance. Oh, I desire to do penance with all my heart, to live at the foot of the cross, to water my couch with my tears, shake off the yoke of the devil, and wage war with my passions, which have enslaved me! Aid me, O my God, for Thou knowest my weakness; break asunder the chains which fetter me, that I may sacrifice to Thee a victim of praise and gratitude in time and in eternity.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Crucifying to themselves the Son of God, and making a mockery of Him." *Hebrews*, vi.

"A man making void the law of Moses, dieth without any mercy, under two or three witnesses: how much more do you

think he deserveth worse punishment, who hath trodden under-foot the Son of God, and hath esteemed the blood of the covenant unclean with which he was sanctified, and hath offered an affront to the Spirit of grace?" *Hebrews*, x.

"I will arise, and will go to my father, and say to him: Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before Thee." *St. Luke*, xv.

"Shall a man afflict God, for you afflict me?" *Malachias*, iii.

"But your iniquities have divided between you and your God; and your sins have hid his face from you, that He should not hear." *Isaias*, lix.

"But they that commit sin and iniquity are enemies to their own soul." *Tobias*, xii.

"The mouth that belieth, killeth the soul." *Wisdom*, i.

"Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy great mercy; and according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my iniquities; for I know my iniquity, and my sin is ever before me." *Psalm* l.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

THE GOSPEL. *St. John*, xvi. 23–30.

"At that time Jesus said to his disciples: Amen, amen I say to you: If you ask the Father any thing in my name, He will give it you. Hitherto you have not asked any thing in my name. Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full. These things I have spoken to you in proverbs. The hour cometh when I will no more speak to you in proverbs, but will show you plainly of the Father. In that day you shall ask in my name; and I say not to you that I will ask the Father for you; for the Father himself loveth you, because you have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and go to the Father. His disciples say to Him: Behold, now Thou speakest plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now we know that Thou knowest all things, and Thou needest not that any man should ask Thee. By this we believe that Thou camest forth from God."

Meditation.

ON PRAYER.

1st POINT. Why is it necessary for us to pray? To honor the majesty of God, and do homage to his infinite grandeur, to ac

knowledge his care over all the universe, and chiefly his regard for the necessities of mankind, to testify our dependence on Him, to move Him to bestow his blessings and graces, to prepare ourselves to receive Him, to expand our hearts by the desires which He conceives therein by the inspirations of his Divine Spirit, and render us susceptible of the good He designs to give us. If you are in a state of spiritual poverty, it is either because you do not pray, or do not pray aright.

2D POINT. Prayer unites us with God, who is the source of all joy, and of every good; it gives us a place at the banquet of his grace, it enriches us with the treasures of his goodness, it relieves all our necessities, gives us riches for our poverty, and imparts to us a power to prevail with God. A body which does not breathe is dead; a soul which does not pray is also dead.

3D POINT. Prayer penetrates the heavens, and, like a faithful messenger, brings back all that we ask for. God can refuse us nothing; the essence of his nature being goodness, He desires to diffuse the ever-flowing abundance thereof; He is like a fountain which, being too full, seeks to spread its refreshing waters; He is like a sun which, having an excess of light, would by its effluence enlighten us. God seeks above all an unoccupied and disengaged heart to fill with his heavenly treasures. It is prayer that obtains for the heart freedom from self-love by the avowal of our poverty, and expels foolish self-confidence. JESUS has pledged himself to give us whatsoever we ask; He will answer us by his Holy Spirit, which prays in and for us. Can we for a moment doubt that you will obtain that which you ask of God through the merits of his divine Son?

Why do you complain that you obtain nothing from God? It is, perhaps, because you ask for those things which would be evil for you; or if good, do not ask them with a right spirit, or ask them without humility, or without attention, or without devotion, or without confidence, or without perseverance.*

FIFTH MONDAY AFTER EASTER.

Meditation.

ON DISTRACTIONS AND DRYNESS IN PRAYER.

1ST POINT. From whence arise my distractions? From the devil, who seeks to weary and disgust you; from your vain and

* Words of Scripture at the end of the next Meditation.

foolish imagination; from your natural infirmities, which burden your spirit and fill it with heaviness; from the little care you exercise for your perfection; from your baseness and unfaithfulness; from your mind, which is occupied with vanity during the day; and finally, from your heart, which is too much attached to creatures, which continually flies towards its treasures, which dwells on thoughts of what it loves, and finds no delight in God, because it entertains no love for Him.

2d Point. Why do I find no consolation in prayer? It is because you have no tribulation, and seek too much the pleasures of the senses. The fire of prayer is only kindled by the wood of the cross and mortification. It is, perhaps, only because you desire it too much, and without reference to the will of God; that you occupy yourself too much with fleeting joys and perishable things, and make all else secondary to them.

It is to abase your pride, hold you in humility, to make you know yourself and feel your infirmities, punish your negligence, excite you to renewed fervor in praying for what is necessary for you; to exercise your patience and augment your merit.

3d Point. Why does God refuse me these consolations? It is to detach you from the things of sense, that you may know and understand the excellence of a spiritual life; to establish you in the faith, strengthen your hope, purify your love; to prove your fidelity and render you more spiritual, and elevate all your desires above the things of this life.

To make you estimate the value of his graces by the privation thereof, desire Him when He withdraws himself from you; hold Him fast and with constancy when He returns; recover Him after having lost Him. It is to induce you to make known to Him your necessities, to moderate your fervor, merit the graces that He designs to shed in your soul, and to prepare your heart for the reception of some great favor that He has prepared for you. It is finally, perhaps, to make you pass from labors to rest, from the path of duty to the heights of affection, and from contemplation to union.

Oh my God, I am no longer surprised that I am distracted and wearied in prayer. Oh, I am guilty of having frequently abandoned prayer through distaste for devotion, and the difficulty I encountered in endeavoring to be recollected in thy presence, and because no sensible consolation attended me. Alas! I believed Thou wert angry with me because thy face was hidden for a season, but I now recognize it to be the effect of thy love towards me. Pardon my unfaithfulness, oh my God. In whatever dis-

positions I may be, I will humiliate myself; I will wait with patience, ask with fervor, endure all dryness and disgust with equanimity of spirit, seek no longer my consolation but thine, and find my greatest pleasure in pleasing Thee. My merit shall be in serving Thee, my highest honor in remaining in thy presence, my felicity and joy in being united with Thee, hearing thee speak, and in holding sweet converse with Thee.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"For we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings." *Romans*, viii.

"Pray without ceasing. In all things give thanks." 1 *Thessalonians*, v.

"God is a spirit: and they that adore him, must adore him in spirit and in truth." *St. John*, iv.

"You ask and receive not: because you ask amiss." *St. James*, iv.

"My prayer shall be turned into my bosom." *Psalm* xxxiv.

"Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened to you." *St. Matt.* vii.

FIFTH TUESDAY AFTER EASTER.

Meditation.

ON THE VIRTUE OF PRAYER.

1st Point. The poor in their necessities pray to the rich for assistance, but there are persons of both classes, who, forgetful of God and their dependence on Him, neglect praying to Him at all. There is a vast difference between God and man with respect to the poor. In his eyes all are equal, all are poor. He is infinitely rich. Men are ignorant, sometimes wilfully, of each others' necessities and miseries; God sees and knows the cares and necessities of all. Men are hard in their dealings and devoid of compassion; God is infinitely tender and liberal. Men feel a natural repugnance to ask favors, but we should consider it our greatest pleasure and highest privilege to address God in prayer, and implore his aid. Prayer is a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, and the perfume of every virtue offered to God. Faith, hope, charity, humility, patience, resignation, conformity, devotion, fervor, and obedience compose the sacred incense of prayer.

2d Point. Prayer is all-powerful with God, because it corresponds with, and is united to his goodness, which is infinitely rich and fruitful, and desires only to diffuse itself; because it includes hope, which renders man all-powerful by uniting him with an all-powerful God; because it leans without doubting on those promises of Jesus Christ, which He confirmed by an oath, to give to all who asked, whatsoever they would ask in his name. That which gives to prayer all-powerful efficacy, is its being an all-powerful virtue, which lays hold on the merits of Jesus Christ, which are infinite, and offers to God the sacrifice of all Christian virtues, which is ineffably pleasing to Him; and finally, because it proceeds from the Holy Ghost, who prays in and for us with *unspeakable groaning*.

3d Point. Why, then, do we pray so seldom and with so little fervor? why are our devotions cold and without faith? It is because we are either ignorant of our misery or else love it; or that we do not know the power and efficacy of prayer; or that we do not wish to humble ourselves before God; or that we are impatient and unwilling to wait God's time. It is because we distrust his wisdom, his power, or his goodness; it is because, being in a species of spiritual lethargy, we do not feel our miseries, and that we fear true devotion more than we love it; hence we care not to ask it of God. It is, finally, because we have neither faith, hope, charity, patience, humility, devotion, or perseverance.

Oh my God, Thou lovest most truly such as are poor in spirit, but from those, who, without any grace, are spiritually proud, Thou turnest away in anger. Why should I wonder at receiving nothing from thy goodness? I have not known my own misery and wants, nor desired aright to know them. I am too proud to humiliate myself before Thee, and am ashamed to pray. When I pray, it is in an indifferent, discontented, impatient, and disdainful manner. My prayers are not the perfumes of Christian virtue, which is a sweet odor in heaven, but a black vapor which ascends only to gather in clouds, and burst in wrath on my soul. They are not that true and pious homage which is so acceptable to Thee, and which Thou rewardest with thy richest graces, but a scandalous contempt which enkindles thy ire and merits thy chastisements! Oh, Lord, show me mercy; reject not the prayer on which my salvation depends. Henceforth I will pray oftener, more humbly, and constantly, believing Thou wilt mercifully grant me whatever I ask in the name of thy dear Son, and provide for me every spiritual good that I need.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Amen, amen, I say to you: If you ask the Father any thing in my name, He will give it you." *St. John*, xvi.

"Hitherto you have not asked any thing in my name: ask, and you shall receive; that your joy may be full." *Ibid.*

"For we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings." *Romans*, viii.

"O woman, great is thy faith: be it done to thee as thou wilt." *St. Matt.* xv.

"And which of you, if he ask his father bread, will he give him a stone? or a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?" *St. Luke*, xi.

"If you, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from heaven give the good Spirit to them that ask Him?" *Ibid.*

WEDNESDAY THE EVE OF THE ASCENSION.

Meditation.

ON THE WORDS OF THE GOSPEL FOR THIS DAY AND FOR THE SUNDAY PRECEDING.

1st Point. "*Jesus spoke, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said: Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify Thee.*" Jesus prayed his Father to glorify his body. Was it not his due? Had He not merited it? Could his Father refuse Him? Why did He ask it? Because God did not design to grant any favor to man, not even to his divine Son, except by means of prayer, which is the channel through which all graces flow. "*Ask my Son,*" saith He, "*all the nations of the earth, and I will give them to thee for thy inheritance.*" Jesus merited the empire of the whole universe, notwithstanding which, He obtained it only after asking it. And I who am so indigent, who need all and merit nothing, feel no disposition to pray, and do not desire to ask the assistance of God or humble myself before Him.

2d Point. "*I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world, and go to the Father.*" Jesus left his Father, and came into the world without quitting the bosom of his Father; and He went out of the world to return to his

Father, without leaving the world. His love for the Father raised Him to heaven; his love for mankind keeps Him on earth. The one draws Him on high, the other below. He has satisfied both, by ascending into heaven and remaining on earth. Oh God, thy wisdom is admirable! Oh Jesus, the ways of thy love are wonderful!

3d Point. Happy is that person, who, like Jesus, can say at the hour of death, I came from God my Father by creation; I came into the world to honor, serve, and glorify Him; I have accomplished what He has given me to do; kept his commandments; done his holy will; manifested his name to men, and glorified Him on earth; now I leave this miserable world, with all its crosses and persecutions, its poverty, and sorrows, and return to my Father, who awaits me in heaven, to recompense me for my labors and my toils.

But unhappy are they, who, having lived wickedly, are constrained to say at the hour of death: I came from God my Father by creation; I came into this world to honor, love, and serve Him, but, alas, I have done all things to the contrary during my life; I have sought only my own glory, my own pleasure, and my own gratification; I have thought only of amassing wealth; violated his commands, despised his ordinances, and neglected all the duties of a man, a Christian, and a religious; I now leave the world that I have loved so much, to appear before the dread tribunal of God to receive the chastisements of my derelictions, my unfaithfulness, my neglect and contempt of his inspirations, and my crimes.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Now this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." *St. John*, xvii.

"I have glorified Thee on earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do." *Ibid.*

"How is it that I hear this of Thee? Give an account of thy stewardship." *St. Luke*, xvi.

"And the unprofitable servant cast ye out into the exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." *St. Matth.* xxv.

ASCENSION DAY.

Meditation.

ON THE MYSTERY.

1st Point. Is the ascension of our Lord a joyful mystery for us? Can the sheep rejoice, seeing themselves abandoned by their shepherd, the children by their father, soldiers by their captain? If we love Jesus Christ, we ought to rejoice exceedingly, that He is going to his Father to receive the recompense of his labors. If we love ourselves we ought to rejoice, inasmuch as He goes thither to open the gates of heaven, which have been shut four thousand years; to prepare a place for us, to intercede for us, and take on himself the office of Advocate with the Father; to fill us with his gifts, and to send us the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, who would not have descended from heaven if Jesus Christ had not ascended thither and been glorified.

2d Point. Go, then, my Well-beloved, quit this ungrateful world, where Thou hast been so maltreated. An immortal body like thine ought not to remain in this land of death; an impassible body like thine ought not to be a dweller in this region of suffering and affliction; the purest of all bodies should be elevated and placed above all creatures. Since Thou hast descended even so low as hell, it is just that Thou shouldst be raised to the highest heaven.

3d Point. Go, great Conqueror, ascend to that heaven which Thou hast won by thy valor; take possession of the kingdom which is thine by so many titles; lead with Thee all the glorious captives, and the troops victorious over death, to honor thy triumph; pause not until Thou hast reached the highest heaven. Go, seat thyself on the throne of God thy Father; it is just that Thou shouldst find rest after so many labors; it is just that Thou shouldst be crowned with glory, after having been crowned with opprobriums and ignominies.

Go, ark of the Lord, rest on the highest mountains of Armenia, after having been so long beaten by the waves and the tempest. Rise, O Lord, ascend to the place of thy rest, Thou and the ark of thy sanctification. Thou hast broken the gates of hell, and gone to open for us the gates of heaven, that the sin of our first parents closed against us; gone to prepare a place for us; gone to present thyself to thy Father, and show Him thy wounds; gone to be our Advocate and Mediator; gone to send us thy Holy Spirit, to instruct, console, defend, and govern us in thy place.

O Jesus, since Thou hast ascended into heaven, I find no longer any consolation on earth; my heart is where my treasure is; my soul desires to be liberated from the body, to accompany thy triumph, to see the glory of thy kingdom, and enjoy thy presence. When shall I leave this place of exile, where I have languished so long? When shall I finish my course, and return to my dear country, after which I sigh night and day?

O Jesus, hope of sinful souls and consolation of the afflicted, Thou hast promised to draw all to Thee when Thou shouldst be raised above the earth; behold, Thou art now at the right hand of thy Father, high over all: fulfil thy promise; take me out of this world, or detach me from creatures; draw me powerfully to Thee, for I am strongly fettered to the earth; draw me speedily, for I am weary of life, I languish with love. Oh, life of hope deferred! oh death, too long expected! oh life, give me death! let me die at least to myself, that I may live eternally with Thee!

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"And the Lord Jesus, after He had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God." *St. Mark*, xvi.

"Ascending on high, He led captivity captive: He gave gifts to men." *Ephesians*, iv.

"Let not your hearts be troubled: I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go, and shall prepare a place for you, I will come again, and will take you to myself, that where I am you also may be." *St. John*, xiv.

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself." *St. John*, xii.

FRIDAY IN THE OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION

Meditation.

ON HEAVEN.

1st Point. Heaven is the mansion of God and the kingdom of Jesus Christ. It is the palace of his glory, the temple of his holiness, and the throne of his grandeur and magnificence. Heaven is the land of the living, the centre of our rest, the term of our movements, the end of our miseries. Heaven is the ocean of all good, without the least intermingling of evil; it is the treasure-house of all riches, into which the fear of poverty never enters; it

is the source of all joy, unshadowed by a thought of grief; it is the height of all consolation, without the slightest interval of sadness.

2d Point. There we shall see and love, possess and enjoy; we shall have all that we desire without any thing to fear; there the good that we enjoy shall be without evil, pleasure without pain, abundance without poverty, health without sickness, life without death, peace without discord, without trouble, without inquietude, and without end.

Oh, how immeasurably will the soul be satisfied, when it shall behold not only all that is beautiful, but also the source of all beauty; when it shall love not only all that is good, but also the source of all goodness; when it shall bask in the contemplation of the first truth, be united to infinite beauty, possessed of the sovereign good, taste eternal joys, and behold forever all that can please it, and never aught that can disturb or give it pain!

Oh God of holiness! thy palace is glorious; thy tabernacles are amiable; my soul languishes with desire to enter, and remain therein! Oh, this world, and the things thereof, fill me with disgust when I raise my eyes to heaven. I am miserable in this land of exile; I shall never know happiness, until I find it in my heavenly country above.

SATURDAY IN THE OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION.

Meditation.

ON THE DISPOSITIONS WHICH ARE NECESSARY TO OBTAIN HEAVEN.

1st Point. To be glorified with Jesus, it is necessary to be humiliated with Jesus. If you wish to ascend, says St. Paul, you must first descend. To follow Jesus in his triumphs, you must be with Him in his combats. He ascended to heaven from Mount Olivet, where He had sweat blood and water, and left thereon the imprint of his feet to mark the road of his glory.

2d Point. If you love the pleasures of time you will lose those of eternity; if you have your satisfaction on earth you can never have or know the fulness of the joys of heaven. It is only by the cross, by combats and afflictions, that we can arrive at the kingdom of Jesus Christ. O sweet Saviour, soon release me from this life, that I may behold Thee without veil; give me death, since, without dying, I cannot see Thee.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"I will show thee all good." *Exodus*, xxxiii.

"We shall be filled with the good things of thy house." *Psalm* lxiv.

"They shall be inebriated with the plenty of thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of thy pleasure." *Psalm* xxxv.

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and death shall be no more; nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more." *Apocalypse*, xxi.

"The eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him. 1 *Corinthians*, ii.

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION.

THE GOSPEL. *St. John*, xv. 26, 27; xvi. 1–4.

"At that time Jesus said to his disciples: When the Paraclete cometh, whom I shall send you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, who proceedeth from the Father, He shall give testimony of me; and you shall give testimony, because you are with me from the beginning. These things have I spoken to you, that you may not be scandalized. They will put you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth a service to God. And these things will they do to you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things I have told you; that, when the hour shall come, you may remember that I told you of them."

Meditation.

ON THE TESTIMONY WE OUGHT TO GIVE CONCERNING JESUS CHRIST, WITH THE HOLY GHOST AND THE APOSTLES.

1ST POINT. The Holy Ghost gave testimony that Jesus Christ was the Son of the living God, the Saviour of mankind, and the Judge of the quick and the dead. Since his coming, He has confounded and put to shame the wise ones of the earth, whose pride made them unwilling to believe that a crucified man was God. He has triumphed over the power of tyrants, who opposed themselves to the spread of the Gospel; He has enlightened, with his

truth, the blind and ignorant; He has inflamed, with the fire of his love, wicked and vicious sinners; He has filled with courage, and given the strength of men, to weak and timid women and children; He has made them despise death, and smile at the most frightful tortures that were inflicted on them for the sake of Jesus. Oh, Divine Spirit, descend into my soul, and fill me with light, strength, and love.

2d Point. The Son of God desired that his disciples should give testimony of Him by the power of the Holy Ghost. If He had authorized great and powerful men to spread his gospel, they would have attributed the conversion of the world to their influence; if He had so authorized the rich, they would have attributed it to their wealth; if the noble, to their authority; if great orators, to their eloquence! But, instead of this, He gave authority to twelve poor, illiterate, simple-minded, and rough fishermen, destitute of all resources, and without human favor or influence, in order that the establishment of his empire should be attributed only to the wisdom and power of an almighty God. It is thus that He still continues to make use of the most feeble instruments to accomplish the most wonderful things. Why, then, should you fear? Why distrust yourself, and despond, on account of your littleness?

3d Point. The apostles having been commissioned to renew testimony of God, they acquitted themselves faithfully and courageously of their trust. They spread the gospel abroad, notwithstanding the opposition of men and devils. They boldly appeared before the kings, princes and rulers of the world; they sustained the cause of Jesus Christ, and confounded his enemies; they abolished ancient and inveterate superstitions, broke idols, and overthrew the temples of false gods; they banished idolatry from the world, drove out vice, and planted virtue therein; finally, they have shed their blood in defence of the interests of Jesus, and to give testimony of the truth. How glorious for them! what a worthy example for us!

We are *all* called to these apostolic functions. Jesus has chosen us to give testimony of his gospel by our discourses, our actions, and our good example. Do we do it? Do we not blush at the gospel? Do we not fear the railleries of the wicked? Do we not abandon the cause of Jesus Christ, to unite ourselves with that of his enemies? Ah, how often have we not burnt incense before the world's idols, instead of contending with and overthrowing them? Oh false witness! oh unfaithful disciple! how often has not human respect, and the fear of *what will they say*,

caused you to renounce your faith? Jesus Christ will renounce you before his Father, even as you have renounced Him before man. If you are afraid of a blow from the tongue, how will you bear the iron sword of persecution?

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"But when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will teach you all truth." *St. John*, xvi.

"It is the Spirit that testifieth that Christ is the truth." 1 *John*, v.

"For see your vocation, brethren, that there are not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble: but the foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the wise: and the weak things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the strong: and the base things of the world, and the things that are contemptible, hath God chosen, and things that are not, that He might bring to naught the things that are: that no flesh should glory in his sight." 1 *Corinthians*, i.

"Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God; but he that shall deny me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God" *St. Luke*, xii.

SIXTH MONDAY AFTER EASTER.

Meditation.

ON THE NECESSITY OF AFFLICTION AND PERSECUTION.

"*Whosoever killeth you, will think he doth a service to God.*"

1st Point. There is no salvation without the cross, no merit without patience, no victory without combat, no virtue without contradiction. Stagnant water becomes corrupt, flesh without salt putrifies, and iron that is not used grows rusty.

2d Point. Your condition is a perilous one if you are without the cross! How is it possible for you to be a martyr if you have no tyrant to afflict you? how can you be a disciple of Jesus if you do not suffer persecution? how will you win heaven if you are not persecuted? Men urge you thither by persecution, God by ill health and sickness, the devil by temptations, the world by injustices, treacheries, and calumnies.

3d Point. Jesus was hated by the world, and you wish to be loved by it; Jesus was persecuted, and you desire its caresses:

Jesus was treated with contempt and ignominy, and you wish to be honored and extolled!

Oh, Jesus, let all the world conspire against me, so Thou art with me. I prefer the hatred of the wicked to their friendship, and love their persecutions better than their caresses. I do not desire to please those who displease and are offensive to Thee.

These persecutions that I suffer are they not signs of my predestination? Since I am under tyrants who torment and disturb me, may I not hope to be numbered with the martyrs? Now that I am despised and maltreated by the wicked I begin a new life, and am numbered with the true disciples of Christ.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God." *Acts*, xiv.

"But if also ye suffer any thing for justice' sake, blessed are ye." 1 *Peter*, iii.

"If you partake of the sufferings of Christ, rejoice, that when his glory shall be revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy." 1 *Peter*, iv.

"And all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution." 2 *Timothy*, iii.

SIXTH TUESDAY AFTER EASTER.

Meditation.

MOTIVES OF PATIENCE.

1st Point. You suffer and are afflicted, Christian soul. They have done you evil and treated you unjustly. Lift up your eyes to heaven, where Jesus your Saviour has ascended; where He awaits your coming, and where He has prepared for you a throne and a crown. There you will suffer no more; there you will be at rest forever. Do you expect to possess without price that which has cost Jesus, his holy Mother, the apostles, and the saints so much?

Bear the cross patiently that God has given you in these trials; you will not be able to find another that is more easy and proper than this. If you fly from it you will find one that is heavier and more difficult to carry, and suffer loss instead of gain. The cross is planted everywhere, in the palace as well as in the cloister. It

is the desire of God to save all men; hence He has provided every one with a cross, for without the cross it is impossible to be saved.

2d Point. The cross bears admirable fruits. It detaches us from all inordinate affections, inspires us with disgust for life, resigns us to death, causes us to make satisfaction for our sins, and fills us with horror for them, through the pain we suffer from the effects of sin. It destroys our evil habits, renders us more like Jesus, and makes us drink of his chalice and rest on his bosom. There is nothing more glorious than to suffer; there is nothing sweeter than suffering, nothing more salutary, nothing more necessary.

3d. Point. Oh what an honor to be crucified with Jesus, to be considered and treated as one of his members, to mount his regal throne, bear his sceptre and his crown, consummate the work of redemption, make up what is wanting in his sufferings, imprint his image and likeness on our hearts, and resemble his image and likeness; to continue his sacrifice, bear part in his grief, and aid Him in carrying his cross, and be like Him a victim and martyr, and like Him be persecuted and immolated.

I regard these sufferings as sacraments. I regard an afflicted person as a crucified Jesus. Is it not Jesus who suffers in him? We see only in appearance the figure of a miserable and afflicted being, when in reality it is Jesus who animates, sustains, and governs him. We cannot hope to reign with Him unless we suffer with Him.*

SIXTH WEDNESDAY AFTER EASTER.

Meditation.

OTHER MOTIVES OF PATIENCE.

1st Point. God chastiseth all whom He loves, and spares not the rod to his own children. If I am not chastised, then, I am not loved; if I am not a child of God I am not predestined. Never is God more angry with a sinner than when He abandons Him to the deceptive lull of his conscience. Never ought a Christian to feel more consoled than when he finds that God spares him in nothing, and keeps him in the furnace of affliction. If he is chastised in time, it is that he may be spared in eternity. All the chastisements of this life are marks of his goodness and justice.

* Words of Scripture are at the end of the preceding Meditation.

He always visits with his graces those whom He visits with sufferings. As grace is one of the fruits of the cross, it is necessary to place yourself thereon to gather it. Grace will never be wanting in you as long as you are not wanting in the cross.

2d Point. There is no virtue without the cross, or merit without patience. The cross of charity is natural life and the instincts of humanity; the cross of hope is in not being lifted above the earth; the cross of humility is vanity; the cross of strength is weakness. In some countries, money that is not struck with the die of the king will not pass current. It is the blow that inflicts the wound which gives it value. If you are without wounds, your virtues shall be without merit. Your gold will not pass in heaven unless it is marked with the cross, which is the die of your King.

3d Point. A patient man is a perfect man. All his virtues are heroic and divine. He believes that God loves him when He afflicts him, caresses him when He strikes him. What faith! He hopes against hope, remains tranquil under all circumstances, is indefatigable in his exertions, firm and undismayed even amidst the ruin of every earthly hope. What hope! He loves God, who appears harsh and severe towards him, because He is God; he kisses the rod of his chastisements, and the divine hand that strikes the blow. Oh, what charity! He willingly submits to be immolated like another Isaac; believes himself deserving of all evil, and unworthy of any good. What humility! what obedience!

God is all-wise, says the patient man, and knoweth well what He does; He is good, and can wish me no evil; He is above all, and sees what I endure; He is powerful, and able to deliver me; He is infinitely rich, and will assist me; He is just, why, then, should I complain? He is charitable, why should I despair? He is patient, should I not imitate Him? He is my King, has He not a right to command me? He is my Judge, has He not a right to punish me? He is my Father, ought I not to love Him? He is my Shepherd, ought He not to govern me?*

* Words of Scripture at the end of the next Meditation.

SIXTH THURSDAY AFTER EASTER.

Meditation.

OTHER MOTIVES OF PATIENCE.

1st Point. Is it not a great consolation to rest on the cross with Jesus crucified? Wherever you find the cross you will find Jesus crucified thereon. He is united to you by suffering, and you to Him by patience. It is in this union that the true happiness of life consists. He is united to the saints in heaven by joy unspeakable, and to men on earth by persecution and grief. God regained the world in a different manner from that which He created it. He created it by action, and regained it by suffering; He acted as God by all active causes; He suffered as man by every cause of suffering. Is it not a twofold happiness to be united by action and suffering with the God-Man?

2d Point. You are a Christian only by the cross, and it may be said that you are not even that, if you entertain a horror of the cross, or live without it. To renounce suffering is to renounce religion, since it is the cross that forms the distinction and character. How can you have part in the joys of Jesus if you bear no part in his sufferings? Will you accompany Him in his glory and triumph, if you abandon Him in his griefs and shame? How will you reign with Him unless you suffer with Him? It is necessary to combat, in order to be crowned; to suffer, in order to be saved. Since men lose their souls by the indulgence and pursuit of pleasure, it is necessary to endure grief, and be resigned to afflictions, that we may be saved. Is not this just?

3d Point. What are your designs, Christian soul, and what do you intend to do? Do you expect to gain heaven by any other road than the one your Saviour trod? Would you desire it even were it in your power? Why, then, do you complain of your cross? why, then, do you, when you are attached to the cross, imagine yourself unhappy, and under the anger of God? This sentiment would be pardonable in a Jew, but not in a Christian. Jesus lived in sorrows and pain, and you, oh senseless one, desire to live in pleasure and ease! The innocent has been chastised, and the guilty wishes to be spared! the Master has been crowned with thorns, and the servant desires to be crowned with gold and gems! the Just One is on the cross, and the sinner wishes to be enthroned! What injustice! what presumption!

4th Point. There is no greater cross to the pious soul than to

live without the cross. The wicked undergo more labor and pain to damn themselves, than the good do to obtain heaven. The cross of the rebellious and impenitent sinner is that of the bad thief, who dies in despair, who blasphemes on the instrument of his torture, and who has neither merit nor consolation in suffering. The cross of an humble and resigned Christian is the cross of Jesus, which is full of a divine unction, and which supports him who carries it.

Let us, then, honor our griefs and sufferings as precious relics of the cross of Jesus; love our cross as the cross of Jesus. The cross is the mystic ladder of Jacob, the throne of a MAN-GOD, the sceptre of his empire, the seat of his wisdom, the trophy of our salvation, the origin of grace, the root and foundation of all glory.

To complain without suffering is the mark of a discontented and wounded spirit; to complain of suffering is the mark of a feeble spirit; to suffer without complaining is the mark of a strong spirit; to complain because you do not suffer is the mark of a generous spirit; to rejoice in suffering is the mark of a perfect spirit.

Oh, holy cross! oh, dear spouse of my Saviour! I adore thee, kiss thee, and embrace thee, with all the powers of my body; I present to thee my body and soul, to be united with thee! Oh disdain not to carry the servant, after having carried his Lord; refuse not to bear a guilty man, after having borne the Holy of Holies; to take to thy bosom a creature, after having held a God thereon. It is to me that you belong, and not to Jesus, who is holy and without stain; thou art the portion of men, the inheritance of sinners, and the insignia of Christians. Come, then, rest in my arms, or, rather, let me rest in thee. I espoused thee at the baptismal font, our union is indissoluble; nothing can separate me from thee. O, throne of grace and mercy, if thou wilt raise me up from the earth, I will draw all things after me; I will save my own soul, and become the means of salvation to others

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." *St. Matth.* xvi.

"For the word of the cross to them, indeed, that perish is foolishness; but to them that are saved, that is to us, it is the power of God." 1 *Corinthians*, i.

"Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for his body, which is the Church." *Colossians*, i.

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world." *Galatians*, vi.

"The sinner hath provoked the Lord: according to the multitude of his wrath He will not seek him." *Psalm* x., *according to the Hebrews.*

SIXTH FRIDAY AFTER EASTER.

Meditation.

ON SILENCE. TO DISPOSE OURSELVES TO RECEIVE THE HOLY GHOST.

1st Point. The Holy Ghost descended in the form of tongues. To obtain this heavenly tongue, it is necessary to guard and silence all worldly conversation; to converse with God it is necessary to avoid the conversation of men. To know how and when to speak is a beautiful science; you will never learn it unless you know how and when to be silent. To speak often and speak well at the same time are two impracticable things. All men learn to talk, but only a few learn how to keep silence.

2d Point. Men of many words are deficient in sense; wise men talk but little, for fear of speaking evil. They commune a long time with themselves, before they hold discourse with others. A fool talks incessantly, and it is impossible to restrain his tongue. God has kept silence from all eternity; He speaks to his creatures only when it is necessary to instruct and save them.

3d Point. Let the silence of God be your example; speak only when it is necessary or proper. A soul filled with God has but little conversation for men. He who talks much with men proves that God is not in him. To arrive soon at perfection we must commune much with God, and converse but little with men. He who is master of his tongue is master of his passions. Solitude and silence are the two schools of virtue. It is here that God makes himself known to the soul; it is here that He enlightens the spirit and speaks to the heart.*

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

SIXTH SATURDAY AFTER EASTER.

Meditation.

ON THE EXCELLENCE OF SILENCE.

1st Point. Silence produces prayer, and prayer silence. After Moses had spoken with God he could no longer converse with men. He who goes out of himself to seek consolation, will have but little interior peace or joy. The Holy Ghost loves silence; his voice is a gentle breath which cannot be heard if there is the least distraction or noise. The Word descended on earth at midnight, and amidst a profound silence. Keep silence, for it is thus He would enter into your heart.

2d Point. Speak but seldom, and never abandon silence except for something better. We cannot speak well without grace. The tongue is the interpreter of the heart. He who loves the world talks of the things of the world; he who loves God speaks only of God. Men make themselves known by their words, and God will judge them by their words; who, then, should not be afraid to speak, to speak too often, to speak evil?

3d Point. My God, fill me with thy love, that I may speak continually of Thee. Send me thy Holy Spirit, and cause the fiery tongues which rested on thy disciples to descend on me; let me speak of Thee and Thee only; deprive me of the power of speech when I desire to speak of aught but Thee. It is not astonishing that I never hear Thee respond to me in prayer, for I associate with worldlings, and hear only vain and profane conversations. He who discourses much with others is not in a fit state to speak to God.

Christian soul, if you wish to receive and preserve the Holy Ghost, speak but little, speak low, speak without passion and with reason; never speak against charity only through necessity; but speak simply, sweetly, sincerely, and without affectation, or vanity, or precipitation. Speak only when obliged by necessity to do so, and hold your peace until it is proper for you to speak.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man." *St. James*, iii.

"And if any man think himself to be religious, not bridling his tongue, but deceiving his own heart, this man's religion is vain." *Ibid* i.

"Since Thou hast spoken to thy servant, I have more impediment and slowness of tongue." *Exodus*, iv.

"A faithful witness delivereth souls." *Proverbs*, xiv.

"In the mouth of a fool is the rod of pride." *Ibid.*

"Let every man be swift to hear but slow to speak." *St. James*, i.

FEAST OF PENTECOST, COMMONLY CALLED WHIT-SUNDAY.

EPISTLE. *Acts*, ii. 1–4.

"And when the days of the Pentecost were accomplished, they were altogether in one place; and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues, as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak."

Meditation.

ON THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY GHOST.

1ST POINT. The Spirit of Jesus is a spirit of life, which animates us; it is a spirit of grace, which sanctifies us; it is a spirit of wisdom, which enlightens us; it is a spirit of love, which unites us with himself.

2D POINT. The Holy Ghost is a spirit of peace, which calms our passions; a spirit of purity, which makes us pure; a spirit of liberty, which detaches us from all earthly things; a spirit of joy, which consoles us; a spirit of humility, which inspires us with a mean opinion of ourselves; a spirit of obedience, which brings us into subjection; a spirit of charity and mercy, which attends every thought and action. We are not members of Jesus Christ, if we do not live in the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

3D POINT. Are you animated by this divine Spirit? Do you abide with this Spirit? Do you act by the inspirations of this Spirit? There are three spirits contrary to that of Jesus; the spirit of the world, the spirit of the flesh, the spirit of the devil. The spirit of the world inspires vanity; that of the flesh, sensuality; that of the devil, anger, hatred and revenge. But the Spirit of God inspires one with humility, mortification of the senses,

charity towards our neighbor, sweetness, and patience. Examine and see which of these spirits govern you. Are you under the dominion of the Spirit of God, or the Spirit of the devil? of the Spirit of Jesus, or that of the world and the flesh?*

MONDAY IN PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE EFFECTS OF THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY GHOST.

1st Point. The effects of the Spirit of Jesus upon man are to render him like unto God. It transforms the sinner into a just man; makes the weak strong; turns sadness into joy; coldness into fervor; anger into sweetness; it renders the ignorant wise, and the timid courageous. These truths are exemplified in the history of the apostles and martyrs.

2d Point. The Spirit of Jesus descends not on the proud, or those who are of the world. It reposes not in turbulent hearts. He flies with horror from impure souls, and retires from vain and ambitious hearts. He wages continual war against the flesh.

3d Point. The Spirit of Jesus lives in us only by grace; remains there by charity: reigns only by love, and rests there by peace. He is grieved by venial sins, and stifled by those which are mortal. We lose Him through love of the world; drive Him from us by hatred of our neighbor; and crucify Him by the luxuries and enjoyments of the flesh.

TUESDAY IN PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE OPPOSITE QUALITIES OF THE HOLY GHOST AND THE SPIRIT OF THE DEVIL.

1st Point. The Spirit of God is a mild, tranquil, modest, pure, charitable, humble, and obedient Spirit. The spirit of the devil is an angry, exasperating, impatient, turbulent, immodest, unchaste, corrupt, haughty, insolent, hard and merciless spirit. The Holy

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

Ghost fills all the house, that is, all the hearts, and all the powers of the souls, of the true disciples of Jesus. The devil also fills the house of those into which he enters; he agitates, possesses, torments and corrupts them, and throws them into extraordinary fits of passion, whereby to counteract the effects of the Spirit of God.

2d Point. The Spirit of Jesus is the heart of the Father, and of the Son. Thus God has given us his heart, in giving us his Spirit. Will you, after this, refuse Him yours? Will you dare offer Him a divided heart? What comparison is there between your heart and the heart of God? Oh, my God, my Saviour, thy Spirit is sweet, mine is harsh; thy Spirit is holy, mine is wicked; thy Spirit is humble, mine is proud; thy Spirit is gentle, mine is turbulent; thy Spirit is pure, and mine is foul, carnal, and sensual.

3d Point. Oh, Holy Ghost, Father of the poor, consolation of the afflicted, come, descend on us. Enlighten us by thy beams; govern us by thy wisdom; sanctify us by thy love; make us thine by thy grace; sustain us by thy strength; penetrate us with thy unction; adopt us by thy charity; console us by thy presence; save us by thy infinite mercy, and lift us from earth to heaven, to praise and bless Thee through all eternity.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"It is the Spirit that quickeneth." *St. John*, vi.

"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." *Acts*, ii.

"Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." *Romans*, viii.

"If by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live." *Ibid.*

"Whoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." *Ibid.*

"By charity of the spirit serve one another." *Galatians*, v.

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." *Ibid.*

WEDNESDAY IN PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE LOVE OF GOD.

1st Point. The Holy Ghost has been given to us to inspire us with the love of God, who is united to us by charity. What is

this charity? It is a treasure of merit, which enriches us; it is a treasure of grace, which sanctifies us; a treasure of holiness, which renders us perfect; a treasure of peace, which renders us happy.

2d Point. It effaces all sins; calms all passions, and produces every virtue; softens every pang, and makes us like unto God; it transforms us, in a manner, into God, makes Him all ours, and we, reciprocally, all His.

What are the properties of true charity? It seeks not itself; it is humble, patient, mild, and obliging; it is not sharp or inflated; is not bitter or disdainful; is not envious, but believes all, hopes all, suffers all, and pardons all. Judge by these effects whether you have charity.

3d Point. What are the obligations of charity? They are the greatest, the strongest, and the most indispensable that exist. It is necessary to love God with all your soul and mind, and with all your heart and strength. With all your mind, by thinking only of Him; with all your heart, by desiring only Him; with all your strength, by working only for Him; with all your soul, by living and breathing only for Him.

Oh Lord, my God! why dost Thou command me to love Thee? Can there be a greater good in all the universe than to love Thee? Canst thou threaten me with a greater evil than to deprive me of thy love? What help have we, if we do not love a God infinitely good; whose love for us is infinite; a God who has loved us from all eternity; who loves us tenderly; loves us gratuitously, and loves us with constancy; a God who is infinitely holy, who is infinitely perfect, who desires to bestow on us an infinite good, that we may be rendered holy like himself?

4th Point. Notwithstanding all this, oh my God, I do not love Thee! I have not within me the divine spirit of charity. I am filled with zeal for the world, and am frozen towards Thee; I am proud, impatient, disquieted, angry, envious, a slanderer; I am sensual and avaricious; I believe nothing, hope, suffer, and forgive nothing.

Oh, my God, I have gone on displeasing Thee, and preferring poor miserable creatures to Thee! I have deferred loving Thee too long, oh Beauty ever ancient, ever new! Oh, I have too often offended Thee, my amiable and forgiving Lord. I will never cease, henceforth, to bless, praise, and love Thee, charity of my God; and I implore Thee to take me from this life, rather than let me cease to love Thee.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind." *St. Matt.* xxii.

"Now the end of the commandment is charity, from a pure heart, and a good conscience, and an unfeigned faith." 1 *Timothy*, i.

"Charity covereth a multitude of sins." 1 *Peter*, iv.

"He that loveth not, knoweth not God: for God is charity." 1 *John*, iv.

"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them; he it is that loveth me." *St. John*, xiv.

THURSDAY IN THE OCTAVE OF PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON FERVOR AND LUKEWARMNESS.

1st Point. By the descent of the Holy Ghost on the disciples the lukewarm were rendered fervent, and the timid courageous. A soul that is filled with the Holy Ghost, finds nothing difficult in the service of God: it runs, it flies, it rejoices, and undertakes even that which appears impossible, believing there is nothing above its strength; it finds its pleasure only in laboring and suffering for God. The true life of the soul is active; if the Holy Ghost does not animate it, or if He has withdrawn himself from it, it is without movement or action, and lives no longer.

2d Point. A lukewarm soul is, of all things, the most miserable. It has lost all relish for God; it is deprived of all consolation; it has wandered from the ways of his Providence; sins without remorse or fear; flies from communion with itself, and dares not look within, or examine its condition. It is diseased, but unconscious of its danger; wicked, but blind to its vices; a slave, and believes itself free; it abuses all remedies, rejects every inspiration; is insensible to the impressions of grace; dishonors virtue; cries down devotion; scandalizes its neighbor, and is a burden to the community. It grieves the Holy Ghost; afflicts the sacred heart of Jesus, and, by its own stubbornness and sin, compels Him, in a manner, to spurn it away with violence, after which it can return no more, as that which has been vomited cannot be again eaten.

3d Point. Am I not in this deplorable state? Am I warm?

am I cold? am I fervent? am I lukewarm? Am I all to God, or do I offer Him a divided heart? Has He not driven me away from his heart? Is He not ready now to do so? Oh, I am a dastard in the service of God! I am negligent in acquitting myself of my duties; I am wilfully distracted in prayer; I frequently omit all devotion, or practice it with difficulty; I devote but a short time to prayer, and find but little profit therein; I do no penance, and have a horror of mortification; I seek only to amuse and enjoy myself; I am free of speech, and indulge in scoffing and raillery; I do not keep silence; I consult only my ease, and am taken up with the luxuries of this life; I do not desire to commit glaring sins, but do not scruple in committing those which are less; I am remiss in all that pertains to spiritual life, but do not believe it; I have been fervent, and am no longer so. I have, then, great reason to fear that I am lukewarm, and that Jesus Christ will soon cast me out of his divine heart for ever.

Oh, divine Saviour, how long have I not afflicted Thee? how long have I not lain heavily on thy heart? Oh I implore Thee not to cast me off; withdraw not thy Holy Spirit from me, and deprive me not of thy love. Take from me all that my soul holds most dear, but leave me thy grace and love. Drive me, if Thou wilt, from all consolations, but not, oh not, dear Saviour, from thy sacred heart, my shelter and stronghold. Ah, I am not still lukewarm, for it seems to me that I fear thy hatred more than all the pains of hell, and am resolved, from this moment, to labor, without ceasing, for my perfection.

My soul, remember the state into which you have fallen; return speedily to your former fervor, lest they take your candlestick away and put another in its place. Jesus is ready to drive you from his heart, and, perhaps, it may be forever. Do penance, then, for the past; work with more fervor for the future, for your perfection. Pray without ceasing.*

FRIDAY IN THE OCTAVE OF PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON RELAXATION.

1st Point. Relaxation in the service of God is unwise and improper, since it is our business in this world to love and serve

* Words of Scripture after the Meditation on Saturday following.

Him. The reasons which make it obligatory on us to serve Him one day should be of the same effect all the days of our life. What, are you less dependent on God to-day than yesterday? Have you ceased to be his creature? Are you dispensed from honoring, loving, serving, praying to, and rendering Him homage? Did Jesus purchase you only for a season? Do you wish to recognize Him no longer as your Saviour and Redeemer? Why, then, do you allow your love to wane and cool? Why are you growing so lax in his service?

2d Point. The farther you advance in years, the greater are your obligations to serve God, because his blessings advance with your age, and if you are grateful to Him for the life He has given you, how much more so you ought to be that He has preserved it to the present moment. Make a review of all the graces He has bestowed on you since your birth; of the dangers from which He has delivered you; of all the evils from which He has preserved you; of all the blessings He has loaded you with; and you will declare to me that you have been an insolent and ungrateful debtor. Why, then, do you become so lax in the service of God?

3d Point. The more you advance in years, the nearer you approach death and eternity. It is necessary, then, to labor with greater fervor. Who ought to examine his accounts with greater care than He who will soon be obliged to settle them? All bodies increase their motion, in a more or less measure, as they approach their centre; and ought not thy spirit to redouble its fervor, now that it is near its end? Oh, how many vain regrets will torture your soul at the hour of death, that you did not do more than you have done! You will wish for time to work, and not obtain it; you will exceedingly desire to make up, in some degree, your deficiencies, but be unable to accomplish it. Work, then, while you may. The time which is yours now may be no longer yours to-morrow. Serve God every moment of your life, for you know neither the day nor the hour when death cometh. Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and weary not in his service, for He is never weary of serving you. He has loved you from all eternity, and loved you all your life; there has never been a moment of your existence in which He has not done you good. How many moments have you devoted to thanking Him for his favors? Jesus is the same to-day, yesterday and to-morrow. God is immutable, and changes not. You who are made in the image and likeness of God fashion your spirit according to his.*

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

SATURDAY IN THE OCTAVE OF PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE CAUSES OF RELAXATION.

1st Point. The first cause is the corruptness of nature, which, being born of original sin, has a great proneness to sin. It is, like the weights of a clock, always descending, and requiring to be raised; or like a tree, the roots of which being in the earth, always strike downwards, no matter what efforts are made to force them to an upward growth.

2d Point. The second cause arises from those habits of sin which we have contracted, which give an impetus to the evil proclivities of nature. David, feeling the weight of sin, complained to God, saying: "*My iniquities are gone over my head, and, as a heavy burden, are become heavy upon me. I am become miserable, and am bowed down, even to the end: I walked sorrowful all the day long.*" Are you not oppressed by the same cause? My God, oh, my God! deliver me from my iniquities; like a flood roll over me. The devil holds me in bondage. Oh, divine Saviour, break these accursed chains which have made me the slave of sin, that I may offer to Thee a sacrifice of praise and love.

3d Point. The third cause is the devil, who tempts us at all times and in all places. He raises what seem to be impassable barriers across our way; he obscures our minds, wearies our hearts, causes our passions to revolt, and prostrates the powers of our souls by weakness and languor. God permits him to tempt us, to prove our fidelity and repair our past derelictions; to increase our merit; to make us feel our miseries and infirmities, that we may be obliged to have recourse to Him. Oh Lord! Thou hast proved me, and knowest me well; Thou art the witness of my misery, have compassion on me.

4th Point. The fourth is a secret presumption in our own strength, and a false assurance of salvation, by which we are deluded into believing that we shall never fall into great sins again. We think that we have done work enough, and put aside the aid of penance as if we had no further need or care for it. Is not this the cause of your relaxation? Are you not one of those who say, I have labored long enough; I will now take my rest? Have you not also said that you were in the grace of God? What assurance have you that you will persevere therein unto death? How many, say the Holy Scriptures, have built their nests

among the stars, who, by their pride, have fallen into the abyss. Do you not know that you are retreating instead of advancing? Are you ignorant that you are growing worse instead of better? Surely, you are already spiritually dead if you think that you are not diseased; you are lost, indeed, if you believe that you are in no danger of being lost.

5TH POINT. Finally, the cause of our relaxation, is a frivolity of mind, and a continual dissipation of the heart; love for an easy and luxurious life, and a great aversion for every thing that incommodes nature, which, by degrees leads us to abandon all good resolutions, and the exercises of piety, and makes us ignore penance and prayer. Are you not in this state? Is it not true that you were once more fervent than you now are? Why do you not mortify yourselves as before? Such a life, you say, is too sad and wearisome. The Son of God has, then, deceived us, when he declared that his yoke is easy and his burden light. Oh, unhappy is that soul who withdraws from God, to seek its joy and rest among creatures. Lord, I never found it except in Thee, hence I will never abandon Thee, my rest, my hope, my eternal joy.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Neglect not the grace that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy with the imposition of hands." 1 *Timothy*, iv.

"But I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first charity. Be mindful, therefore, from whence thou art fallen: and do penance, and do the first works." *Apocalypse*, ii.

"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill." *St. Matt.* v.

"No man putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." *St. Luke*, ix.

"If a man fasteth for his sins, and doeth the same again, what doth his humbling himself profit him? Who will hear his prayer?" *Ecclesiasticus*, xxxiv.

"Now have I begun: this is the change of the right hand of the Most High." *Psalm* lxxvi.

TWENTY-FIFTH OF MARCH.

ANNUNCIATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Meditation.

ON THE MYSTERY.

1st Point. It is a great and excellent virtue to preserve a simplicity of character and singleness of heart in the midst of greatness; to be humble amidst the pomps and glory of life. Mary was the Mother of God, and she styled herself his servant; she was worthy of the honor of her holy maternity by her immaculate conception and her virginity, but she conceived our Lord by her humility. She humiliated her spirit by believing that which she did not understand; humiliated her heart by accepting that which she had not desired. "*Behold*," said she, "*the handmaid of the Lord*, be it done unto me, neither according to my desire nor fear, *but according to thy word*, and the will of the Lord."

2d Point. Mary rejoiced that she had conceived in her womb the Son of the Living God, but she was more happy in having conceived Him in her spirit. Before she conceived her Son by nature she had conceived Him by grace; before she conceived Him in her womb she had conceived Him in her heart. This spiritual conception of God was more honorable to her than the one which made her the Mother of God, for it made her worthy of the high and glorious dignity she received.

3d Point. Mary is the Mother of God. This is a particular grace which was bestowed on her, and a peculiar privilege which will never be granted to any other. But if you cannot conceive the Son of God corporally, how will you do so spiritually? They who do the will of my Father, He saith, the same is my brother, my sister, and my mother. Conceive Him by faith, bring Him forth by charity, and renew his life in the heart of your neighbor. If you are pure, humble, and obedient, like Mary, the Holy Ghost will descend on you and give life to Jesus in your soul. If you are, like her, a handmaid of the Lord, you will become, spiritually, the Mother of God.

4th Point. The sacrament of communion is a new incarnation. When you go to holy communion, you go to conceive in your hearts the Son of God and of Mary, Him whom the angels call the Son of the Most High, the great and Holy One by excellence, the King who will reign forever in the house of Jacob. The Holy Ghost attends you to accomplish the great mystery of the

work of the Most High, and to cover you with the shadow of faith, without which it is impossible to conceive Jesus Christ.

The fathers were astonished that Jesus condescended to enter the womb of one of his creatures, although she was the purest of virgins and conceived without sin; but who is astonished when He descends into a heart so soiled by impurity and infinite disorders as yours? Supply by your humility all that is wanting in you of purity. Fear not, you have found favor with God, inasmuch as you are reconciled to Him by the sacrament of penance. Believe, like our Blessed Lady, that all He has promised will be accomplished in you, and your joy will be full. Hope, as she did, although the thing hoped for may seem impossible; obey, as she did, and say with profound humility, under all circumstances: "*Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to thy word.*" Not as I will or desire, but as Thou wilt, O my God.

Oh, incomparable Virgin! oh, most blessed and glorious of women! oh, most pure and holy Mother of God! it fills me with joy to behold thee elevated to so eminent a dignity, and crowned with a diadem of which God alone can conceive the price and value. Oh, do not disdain to recognize as your child one whom Jesus Christ acknowledges as his brother, his sister. In becoming the Mother of God thou hast become also the Mother of men, since, in giving life to a God, thou hast given it to them. Thy breasts are filled with the milk of grace and mercy; give to the righteous the milk of grace, and to poor sinners the milk of mercy; show thyself our Mother indeed, and intercede for us with Him who was born of thee.

Paraphrase.

ON THE ANGELICAL SALUTATION.

"*Hail, full of grace!*" Thou wert full of grace from the moment of thy conception; and it was of this superabundant plenitude that the blind received sight, the sick health, the sorrowful consolation, the captive freedom, the just grace, the angels joy, the Son of God his flesh, and the Holy Trinity its glory.

"*The Lord is with thee,*" as a father with his daughter, as a son with his mother, as a bride with her spouse. The Father communicates his power, the Son his grace, the Holy Ghost his love. Oh, holy Virgin! I am ever thine by continual devotion; thou art ever mine by thy continued protection.

"*Blessed art thou amongst women;*" who have been, who are, and

who will be. Blessed in thy conception, having been born without original sin; blessed in thy annunciation, having become a mother without ceasing to be a virgin; blessed in thy assumption, in being conveyed, after death, body and soul, to heaven, to reign there forever, with Jesus thy beloved Son.

"*Blessed is the fruit of thy womb.*" Jesus Christ, who chose thee for his mother, has elevated thee to a throne, whereon thou reignest, the joy of the world, the glory of heaven and the queen of angels, mother of the just, refuge of sinners, the terror of devils, and the hope and consolation of the afflicted.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, and of men, *pray for us*, poor *sinners*, since thou art our Queen, Mother, Advocate, and Mediatrix, after thy divine Son; pray for us while we toil and suffer in this valley of tears, while we combat with our strong foes, and are surrounded by innumerable dangers, and exposed to the furious assaults of the devil.

But chiefly at *the hour of our death*, which will decide the great affair of our salvation; the hour in which time shall be no more for us; when we shall be assailed by terrors and temptations, and be in extreme need of thy gracious assistance, be with us. Thou didst assist at the death of the chief of the predestined, be present, then, to aid me, for whom He died. I am thy handmaid and thy servant; suffer me not to fall into the eternal abyss, but obtain for me the grace of dying well, that I may see the face of God in peace, and praise and bless thee through all eternity.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"And Mary said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word." *St Luke*, ii.

"Whosoever shall do the will of my Father, that is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother." *St. Matth.* xii.

"He is not ashamed to call them brethren." *Hebrews*, i.

"The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. *St. Luke*, i.

TRINITY SUNDAY.

THE GOSPEL. *St. Matt.* xxviii. 18–20.

"At that time Jesus said to his disciples: All power is given to me in heaven, and on earth. Going, therefore, teach all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."

Meditation.

ON THE MYSTERY OF THE HOLY TRINITY.

1ST POINT. God created and placed us in this world to love, honor, and serve Him, that, after death, we might reign eternally with Him in heaven. What have you done, so far, to co-operate with Him in his merciful designs for your salvation? What master have you served? Whom have you obeyed? What have you effected for the glory of God? Have you loved Him for his infinite mercies, and his infinite perfections? Have you labored for his interests? Oh, what injustice, to refuse obedience to Him who has given you being! How base is your ingratitude, in return for the innumerable blessings of his providence! How injurious to his honor, and contemptuous of his power, to abandon his service for that of the devil! What impiety, and irreverence towards the Supreme Being, to adore any other God than Him!

2D POINT. The wicked deify creatures, and the things of sense, by their exclusive and inordinate love for them; and adore them as gods. They worship an accursed trinity on earth, and despise the glorious Trinity of heaven. They esteem only the temporal greatness and riches of the world; they seek only its transitory possessions, and desire only its sensual pleasures. In these, the world, the flesh, and the devil, behold the trinity whom they adore! They outrage and dishonor the power of the Father, the wisdom of the Son, and the infinite compassion and goodness of the Holy Ghost. Behold the divine and eternal Trinity whom they despise.

Is it not mockery to declare that you believe God to be all-wise, and yet murmur against his providence? to be all-powerful, and yet refuse to hope fully in Him, and not fear to offend Him? to believe Him infinitely holy, and commit in his presence the most abominable crimes? to believe Him infinitely pure, and

still abandon one's self to the most infamous passions? to believe a God infinitely good and perfect, and refnse to love Him? to believe Him all-powerful and just, and refuse to obey Him? to believe Him to be the Almighty Dispenser of every good and perfect gift, and refuse to thank Him? Oh, monstrous inconsistency! oh, insulting mockery! oh, dangerous delusion!

3d Point. The Holy Trinity reigns over us by power, wisdom, and goodness. The Father reigns over our souls by his power, which created, and which sustains us; the Son by his wisdom, which has ransomed, and which instructs us; the Holy Ghost by his goodness, which has sanctified, and which animates us. The Father reigns over the substance of our souls, the Son over our understanding, the Holy Ghost over our hearts. We subsist only by the strength of God; we are governed only by the wisdom of God; and it should be our first desire to seek only the will and glory of God. Behold the reign of the Holy Trinity!

Oh, my God, my Lord! holy and adorable Trinity! I adore Thee, and recognize Thee for my God, one in essence, though subsisting in three persons. I believe that which I cannot understand, and am full of joy at being able to make unto Thee a sacrifice of my spirit, through a blind obedience to thy word. I perceive the glorious excellence of my religion by the magnitude of the truths it teaches me. Since Thou art my Sovereign, it is just and proper that all within me should render Thee homage; that my spirit, strength and will should adore Thee without ceasing; my spirit by my faith, my strength by my hope, my will by my charity; my spirit by believing that which it cannot comprehend, my strength by hoping for what I cannot see, my will by loving those things which are opposed to nature; my spirit by believing in darkness, my strength by hoping in infirmity, my will by loving in adversity.

4th Point. Oh, adorable Trinity, Thou wouldst no longer be God, if Thou wert not exalted high above human reason; and my soul could not adore Thee, if my mind and heart could comprehend Thee, because then Thou wouldst not be infinite. But Thou art my God, because Thou art infinitely great and incomprehensible to all creatures.

All glory, then, be to the Father, who has created me; glory be to the Son, who has redeemed me; glory be to the Holy Ghost, who has sanctified me! Glory be to the Father, who sustains me by his power; glory be to the Son, who governs me by his wisdom; glory be to the Holy Ghost, who animates and sanctifies me by his love! Glory be to the Father, who sustains my

being; glory be to the Son, who enlightens my understanding; glory be to the Holy Ghost, who consecrates my will! Let the Holy Trinity be praised, adored and glorified, by angels and men, in time and throughout eternity. Amen.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Go, therefore, teach all nations: Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." *St. Matt.* xxviii.

"For there are three that bear testimony in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." 1 *John*, v.

"And they (the seraphims) cried one to another, and said: Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of hosts; all the earth is full of his glory." *Isaias*, vi.

"For all that is in the world, is the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life." 1 *John*, ii.

MONDAY AFTER TRINITY SUNDAY.

Meditation.

ON THE DIVINE PERFECTIONS.

1st Point. What is God? No human being can give us a perfect idea of God. None can comprehend Him. God is all in all; God is that by whom all things are; God is that on whom all depend; the One from whom all proceed, and who is self-existent. He is the first cause, the last end, the centre and foundation of all beings.

2d Point. What is God? An all-powerful will, a ravishing and ineffable perfection, an infallible source of reason, a power without infirmity, justice without passion, truth without error, immensity without bounds, an eternity without beginning or end.

3d Point. What is God? He is the author of all that is visible and invisible; the beautiful, by whom all things are rendered beautiful; the good, from whom all derive good. He is in the sun to give us light, in the fire to give us warmth, in the water to refresh us, in our daily bread to nourish us, in the flowers to delight us, and in the earth to support and sustain us.*

* Words of Scripture at the end of Meditation for Wednesday after Trinity Sunday.

TUESDAY AFTER TRINITY SUNDAY.

Meditation.

ON THE DIVINE PERFECTIONS.

1st Point. What is God? I can neither see, know, or comprehend through my senses, because He is without color, sound, odor, taste, and substance. He is a light above all lights, that the human eye cannot gaze on; a voice above all voices, that the mortal ear cannot hear; odor above all odors, that the smell cannot perceive; sweetness above all sweetness, that the tongue cannot taste; substance above all substances, that the hand cannot touch.

2d Point. What is God? An incomprehensible Being, who comprehends all; an invisible Being, who sees all; an indivisible Being, who divides all; an inaccessible Being, who is in all; an eternal Being, who produces all; a motionless Being, who moves all; an invariable Being, who changes all; a Being who inhabits himself, is happy in himself, sufficient for himself, and finds all in himself; who is great without quantity, good without quality, beautiful without figure, infinite without number, eternal without length, and all-perfect without parts.

3d Point. What is God? A Being who surrounds all, and is not divided; in all, and not confined; with all, and not separated; above all, and not lifted up; below all, and not lowered. It is in Him I live, move, and have my being. In Him I labor, in Him I rest. I am ever in Him and He in me; notwithstanding which I do not think of Him; I do not love Him, but think only of myself, and work only for myself. What injustice! What ingratitude!*

WEDNESDAY AFTER TRINITY SUNDAY.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. What is God? A Being, whose nature is all goodness, whose grandeur is all majesty, whose life is all fruitfulness, whose understanding is all wisdom, whose will is all sanctity, whose thoughts are all light, inclinations all love, actions all

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

power, eternity all duration, and whose movements are nothing but rest.

2d Point. What is God? A Being ever present but never seen; always moving and always resting, always receiving without amassing any thing, always giving without decreasing his store, always loving without inquietude, always seeking without going astray from the centre of his peace and holiness; finally, a Being incomprehensible in his nature, admirable in his effects, adorable in the angels, amiable in men, most desirable in the joy of the predestined, and most terrible and formidable in the example of the damned.

3d Point. Oh, great God! oh, almighty Spirit! Thou art terrible to our understanding, but most sweet and consoling to our will. Oh, Holy of Holies! all my bones, though insensible in their nature, are sensible of thy presence, and cry out, day and night: "*Lord, who is like to Thee?*"

Oh my soul! what seekest thou on earth? Goodness? It is in God, without malice. Beauty? It is in God, without stain. Perfection? It is in God, without defect. Wisdom? It is in God, without error. Strength? It is in God, without weakness. Pleasure? It is in God, without grief. Abundance? It is in God, without poverty. Glory? It is in God, without confusion. Felicity? It is in God, without misery. Peace? It is in God, without conflict or trouble. And, notwithstanding all this, you neither love nor seek Him; you fly from this never-failing source of blessings and infinite satisfaction, to drink from broken cisterns, which cannot refresh or satisfy you.

O Lord my God, henceforth I will love Thee with all my heart, since Thou art my joy and sovereign happiness, the principal of my being and the centre of my repose. I will ask for nothing, since I have found in Thee all that my soul desires. Oh, sweet consolation! to feel that the measure of my love for Thee on earth is full; to know that I possess Thee in my heart, all infinite as Thou art; and that Thou art willing to continue therein.

Oh my soul! why have you not given yourself entirely to Him at all times and in every way? Why cannot you be satisfied with a God who is so rich, so great, so wise, so powerful, so good, so beautiful, and so perfect? What can you find in creatures at all comparable to Him? Have you ever found any thing separated from Him to content you? When will you return from your wanderings? when will you seek the only true good? when will you content yourself with Him who is sufficient for himself, and holds within himself infinite gifts and blessings? Surely a

heart which cannot be satisfied with the possession of God must resemble Lucifer in its pride and avarice; a heart that God cannot please must indeed be wicked and blind.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"I AM WHO AM." *Exodus*, iii.

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, saith the Lord God, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." *Apocalypse*, i.

"Who is like to Thee among the strong, O Lord? Who is like to Thee, glorious in holiness, terrible and praiseworthy, doing wonders." *Exodus*, xv.

"For of Him, and by Him, and in Him, are all things: to Him be glory forever. Amen." *Romans*, xi.

THURSDAY.

FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

Meditation.

ON THE INSTITUTION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

1ST POINT. Thy wisdom, O my God, is admirable; thy judgments are profound and thy designs impenetrable. Why shouldst Thou, whose sacred body is immortal and incorruptible, wish to remain on earth, which is a place of death and corruption? Should not the most exalted of all bodies abide in the highest heavens?

Jesus Christ remained on earth to glorify his Father, and impart the choicest treasures of his grace to his Church. For if there is a God there must be a religion, and consequently a sacrifice and victim. As the Son of God established a religion which He declared should endure until the consummation of time, it was necessary to have a victim which would also endure until the end of all time. He then assumed the quality of victim. He only can be sacrificed, because all other sacrifices are abrogated; and He remains on our altars a perpetual oblation, a pure, holy, and immaculate victim, of which all other offerings were only the types.

Men should render continual homage to God, to acknowledge his supreme dominion; declare their dependence on Him; thank Him for all the blessings, graces, and goods they have received

at his hands; make known to Him all their necessities, corporal and spiritual, and make satisfaction to his divine Majesty for the sins which are incessantly committed against Him and the outrages which are continually offered to Him. Jesus has offered himself, having suffered and died on the cross, a propitiation for the sins of the world, and to render homage to his eternal Father; but it was necessary to perpetuate the memory of the same and institute a sacrifice in his Church, by which a perfect and acceptable homage would be continually rendered to God by religion, who acknowledges no religion that is without sacrifice. It was for this that He remains on earth; for this that He condescends to be our priest, our victim, our food, our guest, our hope, our consolation.

2d Point. Friendship requires three things: to live with your friend, transform yourself in him, and die for him. This is what Jesus does in this divine sacrament. He lives and eats with us, and we eat with Him. He is, in a manner, transformed into us, and we into Him. He dies every day, sacramentally, on the altar for us, and renews thereon the sacrifice that he made on the cross of his body and blood. Oh, unparalleled love! Oh, ineffable charity! Oh, what glory for God! Oh, what consolation for man!

3d Point. Jesus desires to remain with us, why is it that we do not wish to remain with Him? If He can live in us, can we not live in Him? If He can eat with us, why do we not wish to eat with Him? If He will condescend to transform himself into us, why do we not ardently desire to transform ourselves into Him? If He desires and does die every day for us, why will we not daily die for Him?

Are we not creatures of God? Ought we not to render Him daily homage, thank Him for all his benefits, appease his justice, offer Him every day that Victim which is the perfect object of his eternal love, and by which He is most honored, to obtain all those graces which are necessary to our salvation? Why do we so seldom assist at this divine sacrifice? assist with so much irreverence and coldness, and with so little devotion and recollection? Oh, we do not believe truly in God; we know Him not; we are ignorant of our entire dependence on Him, and the extreme need we always have of his succor and support, and the indispensable obligations that we are under of making satisfaction to his justice. Alas! Jesus Christ dies daily for us, and we strive not to live for Him.*

* Words of Scripture after the Meditation for Saturday.

FRIDAY IN THE OCTAVE OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

Meditation.

JESUS INSTITUTED THIS SACRAMENT FOR THE GOOD AND CONSOLATION OF OUR SOULS.

1st Point. Jesus Christ remains on earth, not only for the glory of his Father and to satisfy his own love for us, but also for our consolation and profit. Oh, what a consolation it is to behold Him with our eyes, touch Him with our hands, lodge and entertain Him in our hearts, converse with Him and tell Him freely of our miseries, spiritual and temporal! All the world could not speak to Him, see Him, or converse with Him, while He sojourned on earth, but all can now enjoy this great and inestimable privilege. Oh! your love for Him must be cold indeed, since you so seldom visit Him, or sigh to behold Him, converse with Him, eat with Him, or receive Him.

2d Point. Jesus Christ remains on earth to save and nourish us. He has care of the soul as well as of the body: as corporal food communicates to the body which receives it, its substance and qualities, so this spiritual food conveys into our souls all the virtues of Jesus Christ with his sacred body. As He has made himself actual food for those who receive Him, so He renders himself spiritual food for those who, with humble and faithful hearts, partake often of the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ our Lord. Oh, what a union! Oh, what a feast! Oh, what espousals! Happy are those who are invited to the marriage-feast of the Lamb.

3d Point. He remains on earth not only to nourish us, and unite himself to us in the strongest, most intimate, and inseparable manner, but also to unite all Christians by an unbroken chain of love, that, as they eat at the same table, in the bonds of the same faith, so they ought to be as one body and one soul. To be at peace with one's neighbor is a necessary and essential qualification to prepare us for communion, and is a fruit thereof. Without it, it is not lawful to receive Jesus Christ, for we cannot be united to Him by grace unless we are united in the bonds of Christian peace with our neighbor. In what state are you? Examine yourself well before you approach the banquet of the Lord, lest there may be lurking in your heart, hatred, ill will, coldness, or aversion.*

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

SATURDAY IN THE OCTAVE OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

Meditation.

JESUS INSTITUTED THIS SACRAMENT FOR THE HEALING AND SANCTIFICATION OF OUR BODIES.

1st Point. Jesus Christ remains on earth not only to nourish and sanctify our souls, but also to heal our bodies, which have been soiled, dishonored, and wounded by the sin of Adam, chiefly by his concupiscence, which has inflicted on them mortal wounds. Jesus has, then, instituted this sacrament of his body and blood, to consecrate our bodies by the reception and touch of his; to purify and sanctify them by the virginal qualities of his; to appease the fury of our concupiscence, and the violence of our passions, by the union which we contract with his adorable flesh by which we are nourished and strengthened. "*Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you;*" that is to say, life of grace, life of glory, and an eternal life of body and soul. Do you believe these truths?

2d Point. Sin has not only wounded our bodies, but killed them, by rendering mortal that which was immortal. By sin death came into the world; but Jesus, in this sacrament of divine love, restores life eternal to the body and soul; to the body because it contracts, by its union with the body of Jesus Christ, the right of a resurrection with Him; to the soul because it is a pledge of salvation, and a sign of predestination. The Son of God assures us of this in these words: "*He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day.*"

3d Point. Oh, admirable and precious banquet, exclaims his Holy Spouse, the Church, at which we receive Jesus Christ, at which we renew the memory of his passion, at which our souls are filled with grace, at which we receive the pledge of that glory which He has promised us. Oh, heavenly feast, at which we eat the bread of angels, which nourishes our souls, sanctifies our bodies, heals the wounds of both, and procures for both body and soul eternal life. Oh, feast of the Lamb, whereat Jesus espouses our souls, and unites us to himself in so admirable a manner, remains with us and we with Him, and is transformed in us and we in Him.

Oh, Christian, what do you desire? glory? Is there any thing more glorious or sublime than to become one with Jesus, and to be transformed into himself?

Christian, what do you desire—life? Is there a happier or longer life than that eternal life which He promises to all who worthily partake of this bread?

Christian, what do you desire—riches? Do you not know that it is in Jesus Christ that all the treasures of nature, grace, and glory are found? and that all the merits of his life and death are applied to us by the use of this sacrament?

What do you desire—pleasure? Know you not that in this sacrament you taste it at its very source? Why, then, is it necessary to urge and compel you to assist at this marriage feast of the Lamb? Why do you assist thereat with so little humility, devotion, and recollection of the divine and real presence? Oh, astonishing thing! oh, spectacle of horror! to behold those who profess Christ partake of the flesh of the Lamb and live like wolves, receive a God and live like devils!

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"For from the rising of the sun even to the going down thereof, my name is great among the Gentiles: and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation." *Malachias*, i.

"He hath made a remembrance of his wonderful works, being a merciful and gracious Lord: He hath given food to them that fear Him." *Psalm* cx.

"For my flesh is meat indeed: and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me and I in him." *St. John*, vi.

"I am the living bread, which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread he shall live forever: and the bread which I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." *Ibid.*

SUNDAY IN THE OCTAVE OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

THE GOSPEL. *St. Luke*, xiv. 16–24.

"AT that time Jesus spoke this parable to the Pharisees: A certain man made a great supper, and invited many, and he sent his servant, at the hour of supper, to say to them that were invited, that they should come, for now all things are ready. And they began all at once to make excuses. The first said to him: I have bought a farm, and must needs go out and see it; I pray thee have me excused. And another said: I have bought five

yoke of oxen, and I go to try them; I pray thee hold me excused. And another said: I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. And the servant, returning, told these things to his lord. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant: Go out quickly unto the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and the feeble, and the blind and the lame. And the servant said: Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the Lord said to the servant: Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. But I say unto you that none of those men that were invited, shall taste of my supper."

Meditation.

ON THE GOSPEL.

1st Point. The Eucharistic Feast is great and divine in its origin; it was instituted by a God, who prepared it at infinite cost; it is God who entertains us therein like a God, that is to say, with infinite magnificence.

He is all-wise, and knows that we will give interest on what He has bestowed on us. He is the source of all riches and splendor, but He has nothing equal in value to this. He is all-powerful, but He can give us nothing more. What shall I return to God for all the good He has done me; for the feast that He has prepared for me, the nourishment He has given me, and for his goodness in having invited me to his banquet?

2d Point. This feast is great on account of the food that is there, for it is the body and blood, soul, divinity, and humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all his merits, all his graces, and his works, which are served, so to speak, at this table. Our flesh is nourished by his flesh, our souls are strengthened by his divinity, says Tertullian. All the virginal qualities of the flesh of Jesus pass into and mingle with our flesh, to purify it; all the virtues of the soul of Jesus pass into our souls to sanctify them.

3d Point. This feast is great, on account of the effects it produces. It cures all sickness, strengthens us against every temptation, renders us victorious over our enemies, enriches us with all the virtues of Jesus, fills us with all his graces, and unites us intimately with his divinity and humanity; loads us with consolation, and gives life eternal to our souls and bodies. The Jews eat manna and are dead, but he who eats this bread shall have everlasting life. Who is there that loves not life? Why, then, do you not hunger for and love this delicious bread of heaven?

4TH POINT. This feast is great on account of its extent, for this celestial banquet is spread everywhere on earth; there is no part of the universe where these sacred mysteries are not celebrated, where they do not sacrifice this divine Lamb, where the faithful cannot partake of the bread of angels. If the poor regard the rich, who give them their daily bread, with gratitude and love, how much more ought we to love God, who gives us heavenly bread?

5TH POINT. This feast is great on account of its duration; it will continue as long as there shall be a man on earth. The feast of Ahassurus lasted only one hundred and six days, but this shall continue until the consummation of time. Jesus will give us himself, in this heavenly food, until He comes to judge us. Happy are those who worthily receive Him at the hour of death; miserable are they who desire not to assist at this feast during life! Alas, there is much reason to fear that they will be deprived of it at their death.

6TH POINT. This feast is great on account of the multitudes who attend it; all the world are invited hither, the great and the small, the rich and poor, men and women, the well and the infirm, the just and the sinner. The rich excused themselves, in the Gospel, it is only the poor who eat at the table of the Lord.

Oh, my soul, what do you fear? You are poor, sick, miserable and blind, and this should give you courage to approach; it is such as you who are invited, and who enter in to the feast. Go, represent your poverty to Jesus, and He will enrich you; represent to Him your maladies, and He will heal you; show Him your weakness and infirmities, and He will strengthen you; make known to Him your miseries, your afflictions, your temptations, and he will assist, console, and deliver you.

O, sweet Jesus, pardon me if I presume to approach the altar and place myself at thy table. I am blind, lame, and maimed, and come to Thee, a sick and helpless beggar, for relief.

Are these thy invited guests? Thou hast assured me that they are, and dost threaten me with vengeance if I retire on the pretext of unworthiness. I will, then, enter thy palace without fear or disquiet, approach thy table with confidence, receive Thee with love, lodge Thee in my heart with joy, and serve Thee henceforth with fervor and zeal.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of heaven." *St. Luke*, xiv.

"But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind. And thou shalt be blessed, because they have not wherewith to make thee recompense." *St. Luke*, xiv.

"The chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not partaking of the body of the Lord?" 1 *Corinthians*, x.

"You cannot drink the chalice of the Lord, and the chalice of devils: you cannot be partakers of the table of the Lord, and of the table of devils." *Ibid.*

MONDAY IN THE OCTAVE OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

Meditation.

LOVING INVITATIONS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST TO COME TO COMMUNION.

1st Point. Daughters of Jerusalem, say to my spouse, to my well-beloved that I wait and languish with love. Say to her that I have descended from heaven to discourse with her, and remain on earth to enter into the sanctuary of her heart; I have taken the form of bread to nourish her, and all my pleasure is in conversing with and abiding with her, that I wish to espouse her in the face of the Church, and to contract with her an alliance so perfect that we may be as one person and one spirit, like the union which exists between my Father and I. Why, then, does she fly from me? Why despise and neglect me?

2d Point. I am the bread of heaven, which has descended on earth. I have assumed this form to give life and not death; to be loved, feared, and eaten, and not merely honored. It is to purify her body that I give her my flesh; to sanctify her soul that I give her my spirit; to unite her to my divinity that I give to her my sacred humanity. Why does she, then, fly from me? Why apprehend me?

3d Point. I have been at an infinite expense to provide this feast; I have spared no cost to give her marks of my love, goodness, and magnificence; I have spread on my table that which is the delight of paradise; the bread thereon is the bread of angels and the manna of heaven, which never decays, but fills one with new delights and consolation as often as he communicates; I have nourished her with my flesh, bathed her in my blood, enriched her with the fruit of my labors, given her graces in

abundance, communicated to her my spirit, comforted and cured her, strengthened her, and made her believe in virtue and sanctity; and, after all these benefits, she despises me, illtreats my servants who invite her again to my feast, and approaches with unwillingness and disgust.

4TH POINT. If I received at my table only the great of the world, only the rich ones of the earth, only the holy and perfect, she would have some reason for excusing herself, but she knows that I invite every one, of every class and condition; the sick to cure them, the blind to give them sight, the feeble to strengthen them, the sorrowful to console them, the sinful to sanctify them, the just to perfect them, the perfect to establish and maintain them in righteousness, and prevent them from becoming lukewarm. Why, then, does my beloved retire from my table? What is it that prevents her approaching?

Say to her, that if she eats not of my flesh, and drinks not of my blood, she shall not have life in her; she shall have neither strength, health, consolation, peace, virtue, courage, fervor, or devotion; but shall always languish and hunger, and be strongly tempted without power to resist temptations.

5TH POINT. Say to her, that if she defers approaching my table and continues to excuse herself, she shall never eat of it on earth or in heaven, in life or in death. Say to her, that I will give her place to the lame and blind; say to her, finally, that fear is good but love is better; that she despises me under the pretence of honoring me, afflicts instead of consoles me, offends instead of pleasing and loving me.

Oh, bread of angels, which has descended from heaven for the salvation of souls, how canst Thou enter my heart, which is the dwelling-place of every vice, and has been for such a length of time the resort of devils? Can I refuse Thee, knowing what I am? can I refuse Thee, knowing what Thou art? can I approach Thee, knowing thy sanctity? can I keep aloof from Thee, knowing so well my miseries and infirmities?

Oh divine lover of our souls! Thou that dost invite us to thy feast with so much tenderness! oh give to the poor prodigal, who comes hither consumed by his debaucheries, the wedding garment. I confess before heaven and earth that I am not worthy to be numbered amongst thy servants, much less to eat at thy table. I deserve to spend the rest of my life in tears, and to be forever deprived of the communion of saints. But since Thou desirest and commandest me, all miserable as I am, to approach thy table, and dost threaten me with thy anger if I refuse to assist thereat,

I will no longer think of my unworthiness, but regard only thy commands and desires. I will supply by my humility what is wanting in my purity, and by my obedience what is wanting in my charity. I will receive Thee as Zacharias the publican did, not with fear but with joy; knowing that Thou art the Lord who comest to load me with blessings and graces.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"With desire, I have desired to eat this pasch with you, before I suffer." *St. Luke*, xxii.

"He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him." *St. John*, vi.

"A certain man made a great supper, and invited many. . . . And they began all at once to make excuses." *St. Luke*, xiv.

"But I say to you, that none of those men that were invited, shall taste of my supper." *Ibid.*

"Bring in hither the poor, and the feeble, and the blind, and the lame." *Ibid.*

TUESDAY IN THE OCTAVE OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

Meditation.

ON THE REASONS OF THOSE WHO EXCUSE THEMSELVES FROM COMMUNION.

1st Point. Why do you so seldom communicate? I am afraid of making an unworthy communion.

Fear is good but love is still better. We do not go to a banquet fearing, sad, and afraid, but with confidence and pleasure. The Son of God has not assumed the form of bread that we might fear Him, but to make us love Him, hunger after, and desire to receive Him. If you feel afraid to approach this table, should you not fear yet more to retire from it when you are assured by the Son of God himself that those who make excuses which are not reasonable or proper, shall never have the honor of assisting at the feast He has prepared.

2d Point. How can I communicate often and worthily? Is there no danger of familiarizing ourselves too much with God?

One is apt to despise men in proportion, as one becomes intimate with them, because they discover defects, which, before were concealed by distance. But the oftener you approach God the more you will love Him; the more you will know Him, be-

cause you will discover in Him continually some new perfection. What blasphemy and presumption to say, that the more man converses with God the more wicked he becomes, and to be holy, it is necessary to avoid Him and refuse His invitations to the feast! When do we produce genuine acts of faith, hope, and charity, if not when we communicate? Can the Church do or desire that which is bad? St. Thomas informs us that she commanded persons to communicate every day, and the Council of Trent recommends to all at least the desire to do so.

3D POINT. I have no devotion in communicating.

There a is vast difference between devotion and the sentiment thereof. One can have much true devotion without being sensible of it. Sensible devotion is not the most to be depended on or desired, because it subjects a person to many illusions. Besides which it does not always depend on ourselves; it is the gift of God; and He bestows it on whom He pleases. If it were necessary, those who feel no devotion at Easter, would not make a paschal communion, and those who never experience it would never partake of the body and blood of the Lord, without which they can never see his face in peace. When you feel no devotion, humiliate yourself; but do not excuse yourself, and remain away from the feast. The characteristics of a true devotion for this sacrament are humility, confidence, love, and a desire to honor our Lord, when we approach it, and unite ourselves to Him; make Him reign in our hearts, and receive from Him eternal life. If sensible devotion were necessary, or essential, to communicate worthily, the method to obtain it would be to communicate often, because the effect of this sacrament is to increase charity, and produce a spiritual joy and satisfaction in the soul, which augments the desire. I declare to you that the less you communicate the less desire you will feel to do so, and the oftener you eat of this celestial bread the more you will desire it.

I am unworthy because I sin continually.

If you hold back from this heavenly banquet until you cease to sin, you will never communicate. You are weak, you are languishing, you are sick, and it is on this very account that you ought to come often to your Physician to cure you; your strong Hope to strengthen you. Can you correct your faults without grace? From whence, then, I ask, will you draw it, if not from this divine sacrament, which is its very source? Did not the Son of God reply to the Pharisee, who was scandalized at seeing Him sit at meat with sinners, that He came not to those who were well, but to the sick; not to the just, but to sinners? Know you

not that the Church teaches that this celestial bread is food for those who are in health, and medicine for the sick. You should not, then, abstain from it in consequence of your imperfections; on the contrary, you should for that very reason feel obliged to resort to it.

If any thing could prevent you from communicating, it must be either the nature of the sacrament, the quality you possess of man, or your condition as a sinner. It is not, then, in the nature of the sacrament, since it was instituted under the form of bread, which is made for daily use; it is not in your quality as being a man, because in that case only angels could communicate; and the difficulty lies not in your condition as a sinner, for it was for sinners that the Son of God assumed flesh, and suffered, and died. Provided, then, that you have confessed your sins, that you detest them with all your heart, and have formed a sincere resolution of amendment, there is no reason, no, none, which can or ought to prevent your approaching this holy table.*

WEDNESDAY IN THE OCTAVE OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

Meditation.

OTHER OBJECTIONS REFUTED.

1st Point. But some say it is necessary to attain to a high degree of sanctity to communicate worthily.

If you understand by this worthiness a sanctity which ought to be equal to his whom you receive, the Holy Virgin herself would never have been worthy of communicating; if you understand by it a purity without stain or defect, then were the apostles unworthy, because they had imperfections, and much more so the primitive Christians, who communicated every day. If you understand by this sanctity the necessary and sufficient disposition, the Church declares it to consist in having no known mortal sin on the conscience left unconfessed before receiving. As to venial sins, the more you purify yourself and amend the better of course. What is it, then, that causes you to abstain from holy communion? *When* will you be exempt from defects and imperfections? Is it not this holy and efficacious sacrament that sanctifies us and heals all our infirmities? Is it not this life-giving bread which diminishes the sentiment or inclination to evil in little

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

temptations, and prevents our consenting altogether to those which are great? This is the doctrine of St. Bernard.

2D POINT. Never persuade yourself, devout soul, that the Son of God demands as a preparation for this sacrament that which is, in fact, the fruit, effect and end thereof. No physician requires a patient to be healthy as a condition, or preparation, to receive the remedy necessary for his state, because health is the effect and fruit of the remedy administered. And thus, sanctity of life, and purity of soul, are the effects and end of the sacrament, as the Council of Trent declares. It is this divine food which appeases the fury of concupiscence, moderates the passions, and preserves us from mortal sin. How unreasonable and presuming, then, to demand sanctity as a necessary disposition to receive the sacrament. Alas! who would communicate at Easter if sanctity were essential to the preparation?

3D POINT. I desire to communicate frequently, but I am afraid of committing sacrilege! You cannot sin when you will not, and you cannot be willing to commit sacrilege when you fear it so. I fear that I will communicate only through custom. To accustom ourselves to good actions is an excellent thing. Is it necessary to abstain from hearing mass every day, for fear of hearing it through custom?

I do not profit by this sacrament.

Do you often fall into mortal sin? and, if not, how can you say that you do not profit by communion? Is it not one of the effects of this sacrament to preserve us from mortal sin? Who has the advantage, those who communicate often, or those who receive but seldom?

Oh, deceit and delusion of the devil! He tempted our first parents to eat of the fruit of the forbidden tree by hopes of life, and now he causes Christians to abstain from eating the fruit of life for fear of death.

You say that you do not communicate often because you are unworthy. Then you will *never* communicate, if you defer it until you are worthy. Is there not some better disposition for receiving this sacrament, than to judge yourself unworthy? Do you not declare your unworthiness at the foot of the altar, before receiving? Truly, it is not the sense of your unworthiness which prevents your communicating, but your attachment to some vice, which you are unwilling to forsake. You excuse yourself from the banquet of the Lord, because you feel a repugnance to confess.

4TH POINT. Oh, what is more terrible than the threat which the Son of God holds out to those who excuse themselves from the

feast He has prepared and invited them to! "*These men*," He declares, "*shall never eat at my table.*" The time will come when you will desire to enter the hall of the feast, but the door will be shut against you; you will wish to communicate, but it will be too late. The king, irritated by your repeated refusals, will send his army, who will put you to death, and burn your city. Loss of possessions, sickness, and even death, are often the consequences of contempt shown to this divine sacrament, in the fact of your unwillingness to receive it.

Oh, Jesus, my Lord! what reason have I to fear Thee, or to distrust thy goodness? Hast Thou ever maltreated a sinner who addressed himself to Thee? Didst Thou not eat and converse with the wicked, to convert them? I confess myself a sinner, but I desire to live no longer in sin. It is for this reason that I ap proach thy holy table. To whom must those who are sick address themselves, if not to a physician? And where shall I find grace, if not at the fountain of all grace?

I have no sensible devotion, but I know full well that it is a grace that I do not merit, and that Thou hast done what is best pleasing to thyself in withholding it from me. I would rather communicate, filled with a sense of my own unworthiness, than with sentiments of self-esteem and vanity. Can there be a greater degree of pride, than to imagine one's self worthy to receive God? There are others who soon weary of their long and extraordinary preparations, but as for me, I will depend alone on my humility and obedience. When I reflect on my extreme unworthiness, I exclaim, I must retire from this holy table; but when I hear Thee declare, that he who eats not of thy flesh shall not have life in him, I respond, I desire indeed to live, and must lay aside all excuses, go quickly to the feast, and eat at the table of the Lord.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"And the Lord of hosts shall make unto all people in this mountain a feast of fat things, a feast of wine, of fat things full of marrow, of wine purified from the lees." *Isaias*, xxv.

"Our soul now loatheth this very light food. Wherefore, the Lord sent among the people fiery serpents." *Numbers*, xxi.

"Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken. I have brought up children and exalted them: but they have despised me." *Isaias*, i.

"The poor shall eat and shall be filled; and they shall praise the Lord that seek Him: their hearts shall live forever and ever." *Psalm* xxi.

THURSDAY IN THE OCTAVE OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

Meditation.

ON THE LOVE THAT JESUS CHRIST SHOWS US IN THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR.

1st Point. Of all the names that can be given to this Sacrament of love," for love is there on his throne. It is the most glorious of all the trophies of love. It is here Jesus makes known his greatness and magnificence. All his other perfections are hid here; there is only his love that remains undisguised. It is a sacrament which proceeds from love, which satisfies love, and produces love.

This sacrament proceeds from love; the Son of God instituted it on the eve of his death. While Judas was bargaining with the Jews to sell Him, that they might put Him to death, and drive Him from the world, He was instituting means by which He could live and abide with the children of men. He left himself to his Church, and bequeathed to her his body and blood as the greatest and last gage of his love. His Father had commanded Him to die, but not to institute this sacrament, which is solely the effect of his love.

If, then, his eternal Father has not commanded Him to give himself to us as food to nourish us, soul and body, how much less can it be said that men have merited it. They have rather merited to lose it by the injuries, outrages, persecutions, and ill-treatment with which they afflicted Him from his birth even to his death, and by the contempt they have shown this sacrament of his love, since He died. Answer! What obligations was the Son of God under to give himself to you? What service have you ever done Him? What gratitude have you ever exhibited towards Him for having given himself to you in this sacrament? How often have you profaned this sacrament, and caused the Son of God to descend into your heart as into a hell? He foresaw all this, and, notwithstanding all, his love overcame all difficulties, and He had the courage to abide with us.

If this sacrament is the effect of love, it is also the cause. It proceeds from and produces love. The soul, in this divine sacrament, beholds and possesses her well-beloved, enjoys his presence, gives Him entrance into her heart; He fills her with benedictions and graces, while she receives sensible marks of his love, is en-

riched by his merits, tastes sweetness at its very source, embraces Him, discourses with Him, listens to Him, and is changed and transformed with Him. Are these not sufficient reasons why we should desire to receive Him?

2d Point. How is it that a soul cannot love the sweet and compassionate Jesus in this divine sacrament, where He makes himself so familiar to her; wherein He testifies so much affection for her; opens to her his heart, gives her part in his divinity, and unites her to his sacred humanity; adopts her as his daughter, embraces her as his spouse, nourishes her as one of his members, bequeaths to her all his treasures, enriches her with all his merits, and fills her with his graces.

3d Point. Love has only one desire, which is, to be united to the object of its love. The Son of God contracts two astonishing unions in this divine mystery: one with the sacramental species of bread and wine, the other with those who receive Him. The first is so great, that some of the fathers compare it with the union of the Word with the holy humanity; what, then, ought one to think of the union that He contracts with us, in which the end is more noble and desirable than the means, for at first the Son of God changes himself into bread to transform us afterwards into himself? By this union his love is satisfied. It is this which it seeks.

Of all unions there is none so perfect and intimate as that between the food a man takes and himself. It is the strongest, because God only can separate food from the substance of him who has eaten and digested it. It is the most intimate, because it penetrates all the body, diffuses itself through all the members, and unites itself substantially to all the parts of it. When the Son of God gives himself to us in the form of food, He unites himself to us, in a manner thus strong and intimate, so that we are made one with himself. Oh, beautiful union, with which love is satisfied, and which ravishes and transforms a man into God!

FOR THE SAME DAY.

Meditation.

1st Point. If this sacrament proceeds from love, produces love, and satisfies love, why am I so cold and indifferent when I communicate? The heart can resist hatred, but it cannot defend it-

self against love! Oh strange prodigy, to remain cold and unmoved when I hold in my heart the source of infinite love.

2D POINT. Whence comes this coldness and insensibility? Does it not arise from an inordinate love of the world, and a desire for something else than God? or from the fact that we do not mortify our passions, seek too much the gratification of our senses, are too tender and delicate with ourselves, and wish to suffer nothing in body or soul? Is it not because our heart is attached to creatures, or that we are at enmity with our neighbor; have no compassion on the poor; we want fidelity, for we receive all, and wish to give nothing in return?

3D POINT. Oh my soul! will you always remain insensible to so powerful an allurement, and ungrateful towards the author of such infinite good? Will you never give Him your heart? will you never love a God who has shown such love for you? a God who condescends to leave the abode of his glory to remain with you? a God who makes himself your food and your guest? a God who seeks you daily? a God who invites you to his banquet? a God from whom you fly, and who pursues you? a God whose love for you was so great, that He died for you, and continues to sacrifice himself every day for your salvation?

Ah, I can no longer resist this love; no longer defend myself from his pursuit. I desire to love Him as He loves me; leaving all for Him, dying and sacrificing myself for Him. As it is a sacrifice of love I will no longer withdraw from it through fear, but will approach with courage, faith, and love. As He has given himself for me, I desire to make an oblation of myself to Him; as He has done all things for me, I desire to be all in Him, to Him, and for Him.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another: Manhu! which signifieth: What is this! for they knew not what it was. And Moses said to them! This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat." *Exodus*, xvi.

"I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert; and they died. I am the living bread, which came down from heaven." *St. John*, vi.

"Who will give us his flesh that we may be filled?" *Job*, xxxi.

"My flesh is meat indeed; and my blood is drink indeed." *St. John*, vi.

"With desire, have I desired to eat this pasch with you before I suffer." *St. Luke*, xxii.

"He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him." *St. John*, vi.

FRIDAY AFTER THE OCTAVE OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

Meditation.

ON THE EFFECTS PRODUCED BY THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

The fathers and the councils named the holy eucharist the treasure of all the graces and all the goods of God. Consider a few of these graces, it will help to sustain and increase your devotion.

1st Point. The first grace, and the source of all grace, is the adorable body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which we receive in this sacrament along with the merits of his passion. He also gives us therein his most holy soul, with all his virtues and his divinity, which is inseparable from his humanity. In the other sacraments He communicates his graces to us by creatures, serving as visible signs, such as water, oil, and balm, to convey them to us; but in that wherein He gives us himself, He confers his graces in person, consequently it is greater and more liberal than the other sacraments. What happiness to receive our Lord, like Simeon, in our arms; to have Him enter into our mouth and descend into our hearts! To find that He has exchanged hearts with us; that He has taken ours, filled only with its poverty, and given us his own, filled with the infinite riches of his grace.

2d Point. Besides the sanctifying grace which He increases, He communicates to the soul in an eminent degree the gift of faith, and enlightens it with celestial knowledge, to recognize and believe this wonderful mystery, and all the other truths and mysteries of religion, giving us a taste of things which are inexpressible and incomprehensible. The oftener the faithful soul approaches this heavenly banquet the greater light he receives. The two disciples who were going to Emmaus recognized Jesus in the breaking of bread; approach this table, and eat of this bread, and the eyes of your soul shall be opened.

Hope receives marvellous strength and courage from this divine sacrament. Our sins inspire us with fear, and often cause us to despond of salvation, but this heavenly bread elevates our drooping courage, and strengthens our hope by those promises which Jesus himself has made: "*If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me,*

and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, the same also shall live by me. I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger: and he that believeth in me shall never thirst. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the last day."* These are the expressive words of Jesus Christ, which elevates and strengthens my hope. Will He who gives so much, so often, and so liberally, refuse the least of our petitions? Can He who gives us himself refuse us his gifts? Will those who are united with Him in this life, be separated from Him in the life to come?

3D POINT. But the chief and principal effect of this sacrament is to produce love in the hearts of those who receive it; to increase charity and devotion, and enrich them with the gifts of the Holy Ghost. As a house that is on fire burns all that is within it, so the heart of Jesus, which is only divine love, entering into ours, sets it on fire, and consumes its dross, and refines its gold. What latent germ of grace can resist this divine fire, which penetrates and diffuses itself throughout body and soul? Oh, if we are cold and lukewarm, it is because we are not disposed to be otherwise, or that our heart burns with some earthly love or profane passion.

This sacrament strengthens us against all the temptations of our enemy, who, being vanquished by the death and cross of Jesus, cannot, in his pride, bear the commemoration and representation thereof, and flies from the presence of his Conqueror. Jesus has, by a word, silenced the stormy winds and calmed the most furious storms. What tempest can hold out against the presence and mandate of Jesus Christ? What passions can He not appease, when, on entering, He whispers: "*Peace; be still. Let not your hearts be troubled; it is I?*" Noah held in peace all the beasts that were in the ark, and cannot Jesus, our Lord, assuage and calm the violence of our passions? *O God, Thou hast prepared me a table against all those who afflict and persecute me.*

4TH POINT. Finally, this sacrament makes of all who receive it one heart, one body, one soul, and one spirit, even as bread is composed of many grains of wheat, and the wine of many grapes. This is the reason why those who have hatred in their heart against their neighbor, when they partake of this bread eat and drink condemnation to themselves, and why those who do not become more forgiving and charitable after communion, give cause to fear that they have received unworthily. Reconciliation

* St. John, vi.

with our enemy, and charity towards our neighbor, should always precede and follow communion. This is the disposition which ought to attend the reception of this divine sacrament, and the fruit it should produce.

O Lord, my God, Thou hast made known the ineffable sweetness of thy Spirit to thy children, and satisfied the hungry with delicious food; sending empty away the rich, the disdainful, and the proud, from thy table. O my God, the hearts of all creatures hope in Thee, and Thou wilt give them nourishment in a proper and seasonable time; Thou wilt open thy hand and fill all the earth with blessings.

O my soul, how long will you remain away from God? will you be always inflamed with the love of creatures? what can you desire if not this banquet which will give you life, fill you with grace, fortify you against temptations, and give you an almost certain pledge of your salvation; heal you in sickness, make you go on and increase in perfection; which will enlighten your spirit, rejoice your heart, calm your passions, disgust you with the delusive pleasures of earth, unite you in the bonds of Christian charity with your neighbor, and transform you into God? Eat, then, often at the table of Him who invites you to the feast, and remember to carry with you the wedding garment, that you may eat worthily.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Thou didst feed thy people with the food of angels, and gavest them bread from heaven prepared without labor; having in it all that is delicious, and the sweetness of every taste." *Wisdom*, xvi.

"What is his beautiful thing but the corn (bread) of the elect, and wine, springing forth virgins?" *Zacharias*, ix.

"And he arose, and ate and drank; and walked in the strength of that food forty days, and forty nights, unto the mount of God, Horeb." 3 *Kings*, xix.

"Thou hast prepared a table before me, against them that afflict me." *Psalm* xxii.

"His bread shall be fat, and he shall yield dainties to kings." *Genesis*, xlix.

"The poor shall eat and shall be filled." *Psalm* xxi.

SATURDAY AFTER THE OCTAVE OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

Meditation.

ON THE OBLIGATIONS WE ARE UNDER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN FOR HER DIVINE SON, WHOM WE RECEIVE IN THIS HOLY SACRAMENT.

1st Point. Our Blessed and Immaculate Lady is, in a manner, the mother of all the faithful, and more especially of all the predestined. She has given them life in the conception and incarnation of her divine Son, of whose body they are the members. She has furnished Him with that flesh and blood with which they are nourished in holy communion. The flesh of Jesus, says St. Augustine, is the flesh of Mary. He preserved, and still retains her substance, which He received from her; and when you, therefore, partake of the flesh of Jesus, you receive, in one sense, also that of Mary. This thought always inspired the saints with extraordinary devotion, and it is one of the reasons why this sacrament is a sovereign remedy for, and a preservative against impurity. This flesh of Jesus, the Son of Mary, touching ours, communicates to us its purity; and this blood, entering into our veins, corrects and takes from them their corruption.

2d Point. If this sacrament preserves the life of the soul, and if the flesh of Jesus is the flesh of Mary, can we not say that, in one sense, she helps to nourish and preserve your life as often as you communicate?

3d Point. Jesus assumed the flesh of the most holy Virgin, only that He might offer it to his eternal Father in sacrifice, and give it to men under the form of bread. These are the two chief ends of the incarnation. It was necessary that we should have a victim whereby to honor God, and expiate our sins. But would it have been sufficient for us to have been established in grace, without any resource or means by which we might preserve it? This divine sacrament meets every want, and supplies all that is wanting; it is the perpetual sustenance and spiritual food of our souls, as material bread is the nourishment and support of the body.

Oh who, then, can explain the reason of the outrages and insults which are offered to this holy Virgin Mother, by the abuse and contempt that men show towards this divine sacrament?

If communion is one of the ends of the incarnation, is it not rendering fruitless all the labors of the Son of God, to abstain from it? It is despising the cost of our salvation, and depriving God

of an infinite honor which our communion might render Him; it is afflicting to the last degree to Jesus Christ our Saviour, who declared, during his life on earth, that he had no greater desire than to eat this pasch with us; it is to prevent Him from consummating the espousals which He contracts with a soul by communion; it is to refuse Him lodgings, as did the inhabitants of Bethlehem, now that He is a stranger on earth; it is to drive Him from our heart, which is his kingdom, and prevent Him from taking possession thereof. He reigns over as many empires as there are pure souls who receive Him.

4th Point. How much it must insult and afflict our Blessed Lady, to see her divine Son maltreated by his subjects, and despised and driven from his kingdom; to see his labors rendered fruitless, his designs without effect, his body without honor, his feast without guests, his road without followers, and his blessings without thanks. On the contrary, what consolation for her to behold accomplished the great work of our redemption, to see applied to man the merits of the passion and death of her Son, to see them reap the fruit of his labors, extend his empire, increase his mystical body, and incorporate therein new and living members, who are all the faithful who communicate worthily.

Oh, Christian soul, if you have devotion for the mother of God, approach this holy table, where you will receive the body and blood of Jesus, which she engendered and nourished with her own substance. It was this idea which so consoled the eminent Cardinal, Peter Damien. Hear his words: "My dear brethren, I pray you consider how much we are indebted to the blessed Mother of God, and what thanksgiving we owe her for her great love for us; for we receive at the altar the same body that the Holy Virgin engendered, and which she carried in her womb, and in her arms; and we drink his blood in this sacrament of our redemption."

Oh, Holy Virgin, I thank thee for having given me the precious flesh of thy Son, which is thine, for my food and consolation. Oh, what purity I ought to possess to receive so immaculate a guest! The fathers were astonished that the Son of God condescended to enter into thy most pure and chaste bosom; how much more ought they to have been amazed to behold a God-man, entering into hearts as corrupt and wicked as my own! Oh, Mother of God, visit me often with thy Son my Saviour; disdain not to come with Him into my soul, since thou didst come with Him, and dwelt with Him in a stable. In gratitude for this blessing, I will sing eternally the praises and mercies of the Son and the Virgin Mother.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"But they have thought to cast away my price." *Psalm* lxi.

"You have forgotten God who brought you up, and you have grieved Jerusalem that nursed you." *Baruch*, iv.

"Come, eat my bread, and drink the wine which I have mingled for you." *Proverbs*, ix.

"For God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son." *St. John*, iii.

"Come over to me, all ye that desire me, and be filled with my fruits." *Ecclesiasticus*, xxiv.

"Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" *St. Luke*, i.

"He shall receive a blessing from the Lord, and mercy from God his Saviour." *Psalm* xxiii.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE GOSPEL. *St. Luke*, xv. 1–10.

"At that time the publicans and sinners drew near unto him to hear him. And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying: This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. And He spoke to them this parable, saying: What man among you, that hath a hundred sheep; and if he shall lose one of them, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the desert, and go after that which was lost until he find it? and when he hath found it, lay it upon his shoulders, rejoicing; and, coming home, call together his friends and neighbors, saying to them: Rejoice with me because I have found my sheep that was lost? I say to you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just, who need not penance. Or what woman, having ten groats, if she lose one groat, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently, until she find it? and when she hath found it, call together her friends and neighbors, saying: Rejoice with me, because I have found the groat which I had lost. So, I say to you, there shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance."

Meditation.

ON THE GOSPEL.

1ST POINT. Sinners approached Jesus, and He received them,

conversed with them, and even ate with them. The Pharisees held them in great abhorrence, and would neither approach nor come in contact with them. But Jesus loved to see them about Him, visit them, and invite them to Him. Far from forbidding them his presence, and driving them off, He showed them much tenderness and mercy. Oh, wonderful thing, to see the Holy of Holies with sinners, and the Son of God seeking the friendship of his creatures and his enemies! Do you act thus towards yours?

Sinners kept near Jesus, and Jesus was not offended thereat. The Scribes and Pharisees murmured because they sat at meat with Him, and Jesus defended them, saying that He came to call sinners, and not the just, to repentance; and that there was rejoicing in heaven upon one sinner doing penance, more than upon ninety-nine just, who need not penance.

Oh, sweet and consoling words! Why, then, do you abstain from communion? Why do you refuse to eat with Jesus? You are a sinner; it is sinners whom He seeks, and with whom He eats willingly, if they desire to be converted. The Pharisees murmur, but do not let it trouble you, because Jesus calls you, invites you, and expects you.

2D POINT. The Son of God is compared to a shepherd who leaves ninety-nine sheep in the desert to seek *one* that is lost, and having found it, He does not rest, but lays it on his shoulders, although He is weary, for fear that it will a second time go astray. Have you not wandered away from your Good Shepherd? Do you not live amidst evil companions who, like wolves, seek to devour you? Alas! He has long sought you, and had great difficulty in finding you. He has thrown himself into the thickets and tangled places of the desert, hoping to recover the wanderer: behold Him bleeding from the wounds inflicted by cruel thorns! When He found you, He did not punish or maltreat you; on the contrary, He placed you tenderly on his shoulders and bore you back to the sheep-fold. He bathed you with his blood, nourished you with his flesh, and, after all, you still elude his love and wander astray! How often have you not done this? Oh, ingratitude! oh, malice!

3D POINT. Jesus compares himself to a woman who had ten groats, and having lost one, she took a lighted candle and swept the house, searching diligently for it, until she found it, whereat she called in her neighbors and friends to rejoice with her. The nine groats are the nine choirs of angels; the tenth is human nature. The Son of God left the angels, to search for man, who had lost himself through disobedience. He rejoiced at having found

him. He does not say that He purchased him with his own blood, the value of which is inestimable, but simply, and with joy, that He has found him; for so much does He think of a soul, that He counts his own blood as nothing to the possession thereof. He invites the angels to rejoice, not with the soul that he has recovered, but with himself, "as if," says St. Thomas, "God could not be happy without man." Oh, what goodness! Oh, what love! Oh, what mercy? Oh, ungrateful man! will you never love so good a God? Will you always offend a God who loves you so tenderly? Will you always fly from Him who seeks you, and only seeks you to save you?

If the angels in heaven rejoice when one sinner does penance, can we not, in some fashion, say that they are sorrowful when one just person goes astray? My soul, what have you been doing ever since you came into the world? You have renewed the passion of Jesus Christ, and afflicted the holy angels, by your wicked and guilty life. And not contented with wandering from your Shepherd, you have debauched and led astray your companions of the fold! How often have you not torn and devoured them? When will you cause the angels of heaven to rejoice? When will you repair the damage that you have inflicted on the interests of Jesus? When will you return to his fold, and bring hither the sheep that you have lured away? When will you begin to do penance, and be truly converted? Do it quickly. Oh, what joy there will be in heaven! Oh, what consolation you will afford Jesus Christ! Oh, what a festival of rejoicing for the angels.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Come ye to Him and be enlightened: and your faces shall not be confounded." *Psalm* xxxiii.

"The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." *St. Luke*, xix.

"What think you? If a man have a hundred sheep, and one of them go astray; doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the mountains, and goeth to seek that which is gone astray?" *St. Matt.* xviii.

"I have gone astray, like a sheep that is lost: seek thy servant, because I have not forgotten thy commandments." *Psalm* cxviii.

"Come to me all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you." *St. Matt.* xi.

THIRD MONDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE LOVE WE OUGHT TO BEAR JESUS, OUR GOOD SHEPHERD.

1st Point. Jesus is the most beautiful of the sons of men; the greatest of all kings; the most charitable of all fathers; the most faithful of all friends; the most amiable of all masters, and the most perfect of all spouses. He is the most vigilant and indefatigable of all pastors. It is He who watches over all my cares, governs me by his wisdom, protects me by his power, and sustains me by his goodness. It is He who leads me into rich and beautiful pastures, and makes flow in my heart fountains of living waters, wherewith to quench my thirst. It is He who cures all my diseases; defends me when I am assailed; consoles me when I am afflicted; seeks for, and brings me back when I go astray.

2d Point. Jesus left the splendor of heaven, the glory of the angels, and made himself a mortal and passible man, rendered himself a poor helpless babe, lived in the midst of labors, suffered all imaginable injuries, contempt, tortures, and persecutions, for me! He shed his blood and gave his life for me, and would suffer and die again, if it were necessary for my salvation for Him to do so. He watches over me unceasingly; He has given his angels charge over me, to follow, instruct, defend, console, and take care of me.

3d Point. Jesus loves me with all his heart; He is always waiting at the door of my heart; He implores me to give Him my heart, that He may enter therein, to render me happy by a union with Him; He has given his life that He may possess my heart. Am I worthy to live? am I not the most ungrateful, unjust, and unworthy of all creatures, if I withhold it from Him, and refuse Him even a portion thereof? What does it mean, not to love so good a Father, so great a King, so charitable a Shepherd, so faithful a Friend, so clement a Master, and a Spouse so perfect and beautiful?

And can it be that I do not love Him? Alas, I do not keep his commandments; I offend my neighbor, which is, of all things in the world, the most afflicting to Him; I do not meditate on Him, I do not labor for Him, and cannot remain in his company without feeling discontented and sad; I go over to the ranks of his enemies, and prefer the service of the devil to his. If I love Him, it is with lukewarmness, coldness, and only in appearance; my love is only lip service, and not that of the heart.

Oh love of all loves! oh heart of all hearts! oh that I loved Thee, sweet Lord, as Thou lovest me! loved Thee as much as thy love for me deserves! loved Thee as much as Thou dost merit! Anathema be he who loves not Jesus Christ. O most tender and compassionate Shepherd of my soul, give me grace to love Thee above all, with all, and in all, that I may praise Thee and contemplate thy divine perfections through all eternity.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Thou art beautiful above the sons of men." *Psalm* xliv.

"Christ is all, and in all." *Colossians*, iii.

"He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." *St. John*, xiv.

"If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha." 1 *Cor.* xvi.

THIRD TUESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE LOVE OF GOD FOR SINNERS.

1st Point. It is not unworthy of God to love his creatures. Every workman loves his work, because it is an effusion of his being, a part of himself. God has no need of his creatures; they are dependent on his bounty, and it is for this very reason that He loves them, even as a nursing mother loves her childen; not with a love of poverty, but a love which is the effect of infinite plenitude and abundance; not to increase his own joys, but to make them take part in his happiness.

2d Point. God loves his creatures, and, above all, man, who is the master-piece of his wisdom, the treasury of his goodness, and last of all his works. As He loves himself He must love man who is his own image, and especially so since the incarnation. In virtue of this union man is not only the image and likeness of God, but God desired to become the image of man. Why, then, do you not love God, who has made you to the image of his greatness, and himself the image of your miseries?

3d Point. Not only does God love men but even sinners; and not only sinners but the most miserable outcasts, for mercy belongs so essentially to God, says Tertullian, that to deny God's mercy is to deny himself. Every faculty loves its object, and since misery is the proper object of mercy, God being infinitely

merciful, must needs feel compassion for sinners, who are the most miserable of all creatures, especially since the time He became Man. For, having clothed himself with our miseries, He also clothed himself with the bowels of mercy. He has shown clearly that He loves sinners, since He has died for them. If there had been no sinners on earth He would not have assumed our nature, and rendered himself mortal and passible.

4th Point. Why, then, poor sinner, do you doubt the mercy of God? why fly from God, who seeks you? a God who invites and expects you, and who extends towards you the arms of his mercy; who loves you so tenderly, and who has sacrificed for your salvation the life of his beloved and only Son? Despair, says St. Thomas, is a greater sin than presumption, for the latter sins against God by assuming a right to his glory without having merited it; but despair wars against and contends with the mercy of God. It is more natural for God to pardon than to punish, because one is according to his nature, and the other the consequence of our sins.

Be careful, thou timorous and scrupulous soul, not to fall into the dark abyss of despair. If you have sinned humble yourself before God; ask his pardon with mingled grief and confidence, and remember that his love for sinners is infinite. Oh my soul, what do you fear? Can you for a moment distrust the love of Jesus Christ, after the assurance He has given you that He came chiefly to save sinners. If you are troubled in spirit on account of venial sins, how much more ought you to dread the guilt of falling into despair, which, after hatred of God, is the greatest of all evils!

O my God, my Father, I have never know Thee until now. My impressions of thy justice were terrible and my knowledge of thy mercy void. Our crimes, however enormous they may be, can never equal thy goodness and clemency. This is the reason why, all miserable as I am, I confide in thy mercy and never doubt thy love; and when I shall find myself in an abyss of misery, I will invoke the abyss of thy most clement mercy, because fulness discharges itself into that which is void, and abundance seeks union with indigence.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Come to me, all ye that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you." *St. Matt.* xi.

"God so loved the world as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but have life everlasting." *St. John*, iii.

"Now the publicans and sinners drew near unto Him, to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured." *St. Luke*, xv.

"Ye know not of what spirit you are. The Son of Man came not to destroy souls, but to save." *St. Luke*, ix.

"God sent not his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by Him." *St. John*, iii.

THIRD WEDNESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE LOVE WE OUGHT TO HAVE FOR GOD, WHO IS THE SHEPHERD OF THE UNIVERSE.

1st Point. How great is God in the grandeur of his universe; how beautiful is God in the wonderful and beautiful creations of his power; how good is God, for He is the author and origin of all good; how powerful is God who made the world out of nothing; how wise He is, for He governs it without difficulty; how liberal He is, it is He bestows on us every blessing, and many precious gifts; how charitable He is, for He does good to the wicked as well as to the just; how merciful, since He pardons so many offences; how holy, because He can never love sin; how patient, because He endures so many injuries.

He has given me many graces! He has preserved me from evils, seen and unseen! He has promised me eternal treasures in the life to come.

2d Point. Who is there that deserves my heart more than He? Who has offered for it so great a price? To whom ought I to give it, if not to Him who has given me his? To whom should I dispose of it, if not to Him who purchased it at the price of his own blood? To whom does it belong, if not to Him who formed it, and gave it life? Is a wicked heart worth the blood of a God? Is it worth the life of a God? worth the heart of a God? worth the kingdom of God?

3d Point. Oh my God, I am not worthy of life if I desire to live for any but Thee. I deserve not a heart if I love any other more than thyself. Too late have I known Thee, oh beauty ever ancient and ever new. Oh, I have too often offended Thee, goodness ever amiable, and always outraged. I acknowledge my blindness, I feel horror at my ingratitude, detest my malice, and can no longer bear with my heart, which has so often insulted and be-

trayed Thee. I renounce all creatures whom I have so often and basely preferred to Thee. Oh, I will always love Thee, God of my soul; I will always serve Thee, God of majesty.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." *St. Luke*, x.

"God hath sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we may live in Him." 1 *John*, iv.

"I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength: The Lord is my firmament, my refuge, and my deliverer." *Psalm* xvii.

"Praising I will call upon the Lord." *Ibid.*

"The Lord liveth, and blessed be my God: and let the God of my salvation be exalted." *Ibid.*

THIRD THURSDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE LOVE OF GOD FOR MAN.

1st Point. God loves man because his nature being only goodness, it is his pleasure to do good, and man is his image, his subject, his work, and his child. He has purchased him with the price of his Son's blood. He is the temple of his divine Spirit. it is by the submission of man that He receives the homage of all his creatures; it is by his tongue their praise speaks, by his heart their love is made sensible. For man He has created the universe. Man is the last of his works, and will one day become the inheritor of his glory. We ought, then, to love God, because He loves us, and love Him *as* He loves us.

2d Point. The love of God is no new thing, for He has loved us from all eternity. We have always been in his heart and thoughts: his love is as ancient as himself. He never was without loving us, and as He has always been, He has always loved us, and as He will always be, He will always desire to love us. Can you find a friend who will love you as God does? Have you ever known one who has loved you as long and constantly as He?

Man's love is secondary, brief, and inconstant. God has loved us from all eternity, loved us infinitely, and desires to love us eternally. Although He hates the detestable life of the sinner, He nevertheless loves his soul; yea, with so great a love that He

gave his only-begotten Son to die the ignominious death of the cross, to redeem it from everlasting misery; and He will never cease loving him if he will forsake his evil ways, detest his sins, and do the works of true penance.

3d Point. The love of God is pure and disinterested. He loves us without having need of us, without expecting any thing from us that will profit himself; without any merit on our part or obligation on his. He loves us that we may love Him and be rendered happy by his love, for it is love that unites us to God, and it is in this union that our happiness consists. Where will you find one on earth to love you thus? What does man seek in loving but his own happiness and interest? what advantages do you derive from the love of creatures? When did you ever find true happiness in their love?

THIRD FRIDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON OTHER PROPERTIES OF THE LOVE OF GOD.

1st Point. Men are hard and difficult to move; their love is proud, imperious, and arrogant. It is only necessary to offend them to change their love into hatred, and then they hate as much as they before loved. The love of God is sweet, tender and beneficent. It is the sweetest of all love. It is the love of a father, a mother, and nurse combined. God is love.

2d Point. The love of God is strong and triumphs over all difficulties. What greater or stronger proof of this could He give, than to have clothed himself in mortal and passible flesh, be born in a stable, live in labors from his youth, and suffer and die on the cross like a malefactor? Could any thing be more difficult than for Him to seek the love of his feeble and insolent enemies; to submit to be maltreated and outraged by his slaves, for the love of an ungrateful people, and to do good to his rebellious subjects? Behold in yourself one of the cruel and ungrateful enemies of God.

And, notwithstanding all, He continues to love you, and to secure your salvation, has overcome all opposition and difficulties. Oh, why do you love Him so little? why is your love so base? Alas! what has He done to cause you to murmur and fall into such impatience? *What* have you done for God? what have you endured for Him? what blood have you shed for Him? what

victories have you won? Are you not one of those of whom the prophet speaks when he says: "*They shall be dispersed to seek for food, and if they find not wherewith to satisfy them, they will murmur.*"

3d Point. The love of God for us is infinite. He loves us as He loves himself; He has done and continues to do us infinite good; He has suffered infinite evils for us; He has shed his blood, which is an infinite price, for us; communicated to us his grace, which is a treasury of infinite merit; prepared for us his glory, which is an infinite happiness. Measure your heart with the heart of God and see if you love Him as He loves you! Oh what a difference! what a contrast! How canst Thou continue to love me, my God, when Thou seest and knowest what I am?

THIRD SATURDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. The love of God is universal; it is not limited, like ours, in regard to certain persons, through sympathies and aversions, through inclinations and antipathies. The heart of God embraces and takes in all mankind; there are none whom this love does not overshadow, none to whom He has not given all that is necessary, none whom He has not enlightened by his inspirations, assisted by his grace, and given an angel to watch over their ways; none whom He has not the desire to save, none to whom He has not furnished the means, and for whom He has not established the sacraments of the Church.

2d Point. Does your love resemble his? Does it embrace all the world? Does it not make exceptions and distinctions? Do you love all your brethren, friends and enemies; the good and evil tempered; the agreeable and disagreeable; those towards whom you feel an antipathy, as well as those towards whom you are drawn by sympathy, and those who oblige as well as those who disoblige you?

3d Point. Oh, Lord my God! is there any ingratitude comparable to mine? Thou hast loved me from the beginning, and I have offended Thee from my birth. Thou hast loved me from all eternity with a strong and pure love; a tender, disinterested, and infinite love; a love victorious over all that opposed it. And can

it be that I have not desired to love Thee the few days of my life? Alas, I love Thee with a divided heart, and experience no joy or satisfaction in my love. I do not love Thee with all my heart, even for a season; I set bounds to my charity, and love only such of my fellow beings as please me.

Oh my God, I desire, henceforth, to love Thee as Thou hast loved me; to love Thee, from the present moment, constantly, tenderly, powerfully, generously, infinitely, eternally, and universally, in all places, at all times, in all conditions of persons, and in the accomplishment of all the designs of thy divine will.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity on thee." *Jeremias*, xxxi.

"For the Father himself loveth you." *St. John*, xvi.

"Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." 1 *Timothy*, ii.

"Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end." *St. John*, xiii.

"For I desire not the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God, return ye and live." *Ezechiel*, xviii.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE GOSPEL. *St. Luke*, v. 1–11.

"At that time it came to pass, that when the multitude pressed upon Him to hear the word of God, He stood by the lake of Genesareth. And he saw two ships standing by the lake; but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And going up into one of the ships that was Simon's, He desired him to draw back a little from the land. And sitting He taught the multitude out of the ship. Now when He had ceased to speak, He said to Simon: Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon, answering, said to Him: Master, we have labored all the night, and have taken nothing; but at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had done this, they enclosed a very great multitude of fishes, and their net broke. And they beckoned to their partners that were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came and filled both the ships, so that they were almost sinking. Which when Simon Peter saw, he fell down at Jesus's

knees, saying: Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was wholly astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken. And so were also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were Simon's partners. And Jesus saith to Simon: Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And having brought their ships to land, leaving all things, they followed Him."

Meditation.

ON THE GOSPEL.

1st Point. A great multitude of people pressed around Jesus, some to hear his word, others to touch Him, that they might be cured of their maladies, until He was obliged to go into a ship, from whence he could more conveniently address them. Jesus was pleased when they crowded and pressed on Him to hear his word and receive some grace from Him. Why, then, do you so seldom attend the preaching of the Word of God? Why abstain so often, and so long, from holy communion? Is it not in receiving that you touch his sacred body, and find a sure remedy for the diseases of your soul?

Jesus Christ made choice of the ship of St. Peter from whence to preach to the multitude on shore. It is only in the Roman Catholic Church that true faith and true religion can be found; it is only here that it is taught and practiced. He desired him to withdraw his boat a short distance from the land, that He might instruct the people. Oh, humility of Jesus! Oh, admirable sweetness! He does not exercise his authority, but asks as a favor that which He might command as a right. Behold a God asking a favor of man! a king of his subject! a master of his servant! Learn from this example to treat your servants kindly, and not to speak to them with an imperious air, much less in an injurious and offensive manner; to live justly with all the world, and discharge every social and moral duty kindly and with due regard to the feelings of others.

2d Point. St. Peter could have refused the request of the Son of God by urging as an excuse, that his boat was necessary for his own use, as by it he obtained his daily support; or that he could not neglect his business, and must fish, or, at least, cast his nets; or that he had other things to attend to besides listening to sermons; or that if he lost time by gratifying his wish, he should expect to be paid; but he suggested no such reasons; he urged no such objections, but obeyed with alacrity the desire of the Son

of God. If on this occasion he had been deficient in charity towards the Saviour, or had allowed feelings of self-interest, disappointment, or ill-humor to actuate him, perhaps he would never have been an apostle of Jesus. Oh, how often our salvation and perfection depend on little things!

3d Point. We never lose any thing that we give to God; on the contrary, it betters our affairs when we prefer spiritual to temporal profit. St. Peter served God at his own expense; he preferred his word to his occupation; he neglected the temporal interest and gain that he might have drawn from his boat, for the spiritual profit of his soul. He lost nothing by it; on the contrary, he profited by it, temporally as well as spiritually; temporally, having afterwards drawn in his net so filled with fishes that both boats were necessary to hold them; spiritually, by being raised by God to the dignity of an apostle. "*Fear not*," saith Jesus, "*from henceforth thou shalt catch men.*" Be not astonished if your affairs are unprosperous; it is because you prefer temporal to spiritual good; neglect the principal, and think only of the accessory. "*Seek first the kingdom of God, and all things shall be added.*"*

FOURTH MONDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. "*Master, we have labored all the night, and have taken nothing.*" This is the complaint of worldlings and the wicked. They labor much and gain nothing, because they are without a right intention, and work during the night, that is to say, in a state of mortal sin. We accomplish nothing if Jesus is not with us; if He does not command us to cast in our nets; if He does not give his benediction to our work. On the other hand, good men work but little and gain much, because they are in grace, and their labors are only for God; they place all their trust in Him, and obey the inspirations of his Spirit. Is not your want of success, and the failure of your designs owing to the facts that you act only from impulse, and for base and terrestrial things, and because your motives are avaricious and ambitious, and you seek not God, place no trust or confidence in Him, ask not his grace or blessing,

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

and always work in the night of sin? Oh, labor lost! Oh, vain cares! Oh, useless occupations!

2d Point. Imitate the obedience and charity of St. Peter. He could have remonstrated with our divine Lord, and said, when He ordered him to cast in his nets, "It is useless labor, Rabbi; we have caught nothing during the night, and cannot expect to be more successful now that it is day, night being the most favorable time for taking fish, besides which, we are fatigued by our fruitless toil, and it is necessary to await the return of the fish." He opposed no such reasons to the desires of Jesus, but renouncing his own will and judgment at his word, he moved his boat farther out into the deep, and casting in his nets, they were soon filled with an innumerable quantity of fish. Behold the fruits of obedience! Behold how God rewards those who obey the motions of his grace, act only by his word, and submit to the government of their superiors.

3d Point. St. Peter, on beholding this miracle, cast himself at the feet of Jesus, and said to Him: "*Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.*" Those who rely alone on their industry and talents, and depend on their own designs, grow proud and presumptuous; but those who labor under obedience, give to God all the glory of their success, and become more humble. Oh, what more noble occupation, than to gather in souls to God, as a fisherman takes fish in his nets. Is this your profession? Have you brought up any from the deep of sin to present to Him? Alas! have you not ensnared souls in the nets of flesh and blood, and sacrificed them to the devil? When will you cast your nets to gain souls for heaven? when repair the losses you have occasioned? Do you know the law? Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, soul for soul. Fear and tremble! Change your life, edify your neighbor, and begin to work for the salvation of souls.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto everlasting life." *St. John*, vi.

"Seek ye, therefore, first the kingdom of God, and his justice; and all these things shall be added unto you." *St. Matth.* vi.

"Who hath wrought and done these things? I, the Lord, I am the first and the last." *Isaias*, xli.

"Behold, I will send many fishers, saith the Lord, and they shall fish them: and after this I will send them many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks." *Jeremias*, xvi.

"I have labored in vain: I have spent my strength without cause and in vain: therefore my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with God." *Isaias*, xlix.

"You have sowed much and brought in little: have eaten, but have not had enough: you have drunk and have not been filled with drink: you have clothed yourselves, but have not been warmed: and he that hath earned wages, put them into a bag with holes." *Aggeus*, i.

"I have labored a little, and have found much rest to myself." *Eccles.* i.

"He saith to them: cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast, therefore: and now they were not able to draw it, for the multitude of fishes." *St. John*, xxi.

FOURTH TUESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON PURITY OF INTENTION.

1st Point. You are God's own, for you came from Him alone. If you are God's, you should labor only for God. The aims of your soul will govern your actions; if they are good your actions will correspond with them; if they are bad, so will your works be evil. If you work for the same end as God does, your actions, like his, will be pure and holy. For whom do you labor? For whom do you take such pains?

God works only for himself, and you wish to work only for yourself: God seeks only his own glory, and you wish to seek only yours. It is evident, then, that you wish to equal God. He only desires to save you, and you desire eternal loss! Is this the way you love Him? If you do nothing for Him, can you expect Him to do aught for you? If you are evil to yourself, who will do you good?

2d Point. God regards not the hand, but the heart; He considers not the gift, but the giver. The intention, alone, profits something, without the action; but the action profits nothing without the intention.

Who is it that you seek to please? For whom do you desire to work? To what idol do you sacrifice your thoughts, desires, and actions? That of the flesh? that of ambition? of avarice? of interest? of pleasure? What have you gained in the service of

such masters? what profit have you drawn from your labors? Alas! at the hour of your death you will find yourself empty-handed, and discover that, after all your labors, you have gained nothing.

3d Point. Oh, you will find true happiness in the service of God! Oh, He will liberally repay your labors! Is it not just that I should work for Him who gave me being, and who preserves me? What baseness to give to Satan the fruit of the tree which belongs to God! Who are you? Whence came you? Whither are you going? Who has a right to reap a field if not he who has planted it?

I desire no longer to serve the world; it is an unfaithful and deceitful ally. I wish no longer to work for my body; it is a slave which merits not my services. I desire no longer to obey Satan, for he is a barbarous master, who renders his subjects eternally miserable. I will serve only Jesus, the best, the sweetest, and the most liberal of masters. Since I am all to Him, I wish to work only for Him. Since one loves Thee, O my God, in wishing to love Thee, and pleases Thee by wishing to please Thee, I desire to think only of loving and pleasing Thee.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"For all seek the things that are their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's." *Philippians*, ii.

"Is thy heart right as my heart *is* with thy heart?" 4 *Kings*, x.

"Do I seek to please men? If I did yet please men I should not be the servant of Christ." *Galatians*, i.

"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever else you do, do all things for the glory of God." 1 *Corinthians*. x.

FOURTH WEDNESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON OBEDIENCE.

"*At thy word I will let down the net.*"

1st Point. He who is obedient is truly happy. He always acts according to his wishes, because he never wishes for any thing except that which is ordered him. He possesses all the virtues, which are the offspring of obedience. He triumphs over all vices, which are powerless in their attempts to resist this virtue.

A disobedient Christian or religious is miserable. He labors much, and gains nothing; he is strongly tempted, and yields; he wars against the will of God, and God wars against him; he forsakes the order of his goodness, and enters into that of his justice. God *breaks* the will that will not bend. He crosses those who oppose themselves to his commands. He drives from his house those who refuse obedience to its laws.

2d Point. It is not just to expect that he who refuses to obey his superiors should be obeyed by inferiors; it is unreasonable to demand it. He whose spirit will not submit to his superiors, loses dominion over his body, which is his inferior. The flesh obeys not a rebellious spirit, but revolts against it. Adam felt the rebellion of his body from the time that he broke through the restraints of the obedience that he owed to God.

3d Point. Is not disobedience the cause of your temptations? Whence come all these obscene thoughts, badly-regulated emotions, and distracting imaginations, which torment and agitate you so furiously, if not from the pride of your spirit, which refuses to submit to its superiors. God punishes spiritual pride by temptations of the flesh. It was thus He chastened the haughty philosophers of whom St. Paul speaks. You shall never be delivered from the evils that assail you unless you become humble and obedient.

Oh, Christian and religious soul! are you acting wisely to draw distinctions between your superiors? Do you not adore one Jesus Christ, equally when you bow before his images on earth, whether they be of clay or marble, whether they are carved in wood, or moulded in gold or silver? Did not God speak by the mouth of Amos, who led the cattle, as well as by the lips of Isaias, who conducted the royal family? Is it not as necessary to obey a Pope who is ignorant, as one who is learned?

Obey, then, religious soul, your superiors; obey them in all things that are not sinful; obey them with all your heart, all your mind; obey them cheerfully and voluntarily, and obey without question or remonstrance. Obey, like Jesus, even unto death. He died through obedience. Be faithful to the end, and lose life sooner than rebel against obedience.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Doth the Lord desire holocausts and victims, and not rather that the voice of the Lord should be obeyed? For obedience is better than sacrifice." 1 *Kings*, xv.

"An obedient man shall speak of victory." *Proverbs*, xxi

"Because it is like the sin of witchcraft to rebel; and like the crime of idolatry to refuse to obey." 1 *Kings*, xv.

"He that resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God. And they that resist, purchase to themselves damnation." *Romans*, xiii.

"Obey your prelates and be subject to them. For they watch as being to render an account of your souls, that they may do this with joy and not with grief; for this is not expedient for you.' *Hebrews*, xiii.

FOURTH THURSDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON DETACHMENT FROM CREATURES.

1st Point. Take for example St. Peter and his companions, who left their boats and nets to follow our Lord. Have you ever found true happiness in creatures? Have you found rest, safety, fidelity? Glance back over your whole life, and you will see that it has been passed in pain of heart and continued disappointments and sorrow? Examine the cause, and you will perceive that your troubles have arisen from your attachment to creatures, who have either abandoned or betrayed you.

2d Point. Depend no longer on creatures; they are vain and inconstant, frivolous and full of defects; impure, worldly, and unworthy; they are more vile than you; you more noble than they; they may amuse but cannot satisfy you; can trouble but cannot calm your soul. Why, then, do you attach yourself to them with such affection? Why pursue them with such ardor? Why seek rest where you can never find it?

3d. Point. Your heart is small in size but great in its desires. However great may be the joys of paradise, your heart is capable of containing them; it is so great that only God can fill it; if He does not possess it you will always be tormented by an insatiable hunger; it will fly, like an insect, from flower to flower, from creature to creature, seeking, in vain, to satisfy its desires and find rest. On the contrary, if it attaches itself to God, it will enjoy a peace which passeth all human understanding, and find itself fully satisfied.*

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

FOURTH FRIDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. God created the heart of man, to love Him. He rendered it capable of containing infinite treasures. It cannot be filled nor satisfied by any thing limited. It is a stream which seeks the ocean; it is a flame which is continually agitated while it remains out of its sphere; a stone which can only rest in its centre; a ray which seeks to be united to its first cause.

2d Point. O my God, my experience convinces me, that I was made for Thee, for, since I knew myself, I have found neither peace nor rest, except in Thee; my attachment to creatures has rendered me miserable. Oh, I am happy since I have returned and given myself to Thee! See and taste that the Lord is sweet. Shall I ever again resort to broken cisterns, which hold troubled and impure waters? No, oh my God, I will seek refreshment for my soul in Thee, who art the source of living waters, where I can quench my thirst and satisfy all my desires.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." *Ecclesiastes*, i.

"Turn, O my soul, into thy rest: for the Lord hath been bountiful to thee." *Psalm* cxiv.

"O ye sons of men, how long will you be dull of heart? Why do you love vanity, and seek after lying." *Psalm* iv.

"Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord." *Psalm* cxviii.

"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." *Philippians*, iv.

FOURTH SATURDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE HAPPINESS OF THOSE WHO LEAVE ALL TO FOLLOW JESUS CHRIST.*

1st Point. Religion is a paradise, wherein one always contem-

* This Meditation is for those who belong to a religious state. Other Christians can read again the Meditation on *Purity of Intention*.

plates God, and always hears his voice; where one is always in his presence and his company, always doing his will and singing his praises.

Religion is a state wherein one falls rarely; where one sins but lightly; where one rises again quickly; where one merits incessantly; where one lives holily; where one dies sweetly, and where one is saved certainly.

2d Point. The yoke of the world is heavy! Its crosses are hard and exceedingly difficult to carry; its thorns are piercing; its chalice bitter; its examples bad; its company infectious; its laws tyrannical; its maxims detestable; its pleasures vain and shameful; its goods imaginary! They are like the Egyptian leeks, which draw tears from the eyes of those who eat them; and cause those who love them to weep.

O, my God, I implore thy pardon for having hitherto lived in religion without religion; for having converted my paradise into a hell; for having preferred the fruits of knowledge to the fruits of life; for having felt weary of this sacred desert, where we have Moses to conduct us, and where we are nourished with celestial bread having in it all that is delicious; for having been filled with vain regrets for the flesh-pots and leeks of Egypt; for having complained of the length of the road and the fatigues of the journey, and for having revolted, like the Jews, against the superiors who govern me.

3d Point. Ungrateful and unfaithful soul! why will you murmur against your God, who has brought you out of Egypt by the all-powerful strength of his arm; and has led you through the Red Sea to this safe and holy solitude? Why will you adore the idols of the Egyptians, and dance around a brazen statue? God will send his messengers of wrath, with their swords, to slay you! He will send fiery serpents which will sting, burn, and consume you!

Bless the Lord, oh my soul, who has drawn you from the depths of darkness, wherein you were plunged, to enlighten you with the beautiful inspirations of his grace. Bless the Lord, oh my soul, who has broken the chains that bound you to the world, and called you to his divine service. Bless the Lord, oh my soul, for having chosen you from among so many who are left in darkness, and in the shadow of death! What return can you make Him for so many gifts? How can you ever thank Him for the inestimable grace by which He has called you to his service? for having received you into his house; placed you among the children of his dear spouse; written and engraved his law on your heart;

nourished you with the bread of angels, and given you certain pledges of your predestination?

I will praise Thee, oh my God, all my life! I will bless and love Thee with all my heart; keep thy law faithfully, and never stray from the guidance of those whom Thou hast given me for guides. I will fight against my passions, make war with my evil inclinations, and live in peace with all the world. Help me, oh Lord, to preserve the treasure Thou hast given me, for as I could not have come into this place without thy succor, I cannot remain in it without thy grace.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"And He took away his own people as sheep; and guided them in the wilderness like a flock." *Psalm* lxxvii.

"They remembered not his hand in the day that He redeemed them from the hand of him that afflicted them." *Ibid.*

"They forgot God who saved them, who had done great things in Egypt, wondrous works in the land of Cham, terrible things in the Red Sea." *Psalm* cv.

"And they provoked Moses in the camp; Aaron the holy one of the Lord." *Ibid.*

"How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! my soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord." *Psalm* lxxxiii.

"I have chosen to be an abject in the house of my God, rather than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners." *Ibid.*

"For better is one day in thy courts above thousands." *Ibid.*

"And every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting." *St. Matt.* xix., *St. Mark*, x., *St. Luke*, xviii.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE GOSPEL. *St. Matt.* v. 20–24.

"At that time Jesus said to his disciples: Unless your justice exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. You have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother, *Raca*, shall be in *danger* of the

council. And whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there shalt remember that thy brother hath any thing against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."

Meditation.

ON THE GOSPEL.

1st Point. "*Unless your justice shall exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*" Oh, terrible threat! It is uttered by the Truth himself, who is the sweetest, the most just and charitable of all masters. He made it to his disciples, whom He tenderly loved, and whose lives were pure and without guile. He threatened not temporal pain, but eternal damnation, if they were not more just and perfect than the Scribes and Pharisees. Examine yourself for a few moments, and compare your justice with theirs.

2d Point. The Pharisees were constant in prayer, they paid tithes according to the law, gave great alms, fasted twice a week, encompassed sea and land to make a convert and bring him to the knowledge of the true and living God. Do you do as much? Should you have done it all, and measured your daily life by their exact rule, it will be of no avail, because it is necessary that your righteousness should be greater and more perfect than the righteousness of these haughty devotees, whose outward seeming deceived only men. Alas, what will become of you? If those who do some good are condemned, what can those expect whose works are only evil?

3d Point. The righteousness of the Pharisees was defective on several points; it was only in appearance and all exterior. They did good only to be praised and admired of men, but within their souls were full of impurity and malice. They were lewd men and hypocrites, who concealed great vices under the beautiful appearance of love to God, charity towards the poor, and severity to themselves. Their devotion consisted in exterior acts, and they despised all who did not live as they did; they were strict in the religious observances of human traditions, but scrupled not to violate the commandments of God.

Is not your righteousness and virtue like theirs? are your exterior acts animated by a pure and disinterested intention? are you within that which you seem without? does not your devotion assume those forms and appearances which will draw on you the

admiration of men? do you not neglect your interior to occupy yourself with those things which appeal to the senses? do you not despise good men whose devotion differs from your own? are you not harsh and severe with sinners? do you not murmur when you see them approach our Lord and eat at his table? Unhappy you, who have only the vices of the Pharisees, and do not practise their virtues! If those whose piety is only exterior will be damned, what will become of those who have neither interior nor exterior virtue? and if those who do but little good shall be excluded from heaven, what will be the condemnation of those whose works are only evil?*

FIFTH MONDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE NECESSARY DISPOSITIONS TO COMMUNICATE.

1st Point. "*Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there shalt remember that thy brother hath any thing against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.*" Oh, the great gift of the body and blood of Jesus Christ! You offer this adorable victim by the hands of the priest, to acknowledge your dependence on God, who is the cause of your being; to thank Him for all his blessings, for all that He has done and continues to do for you, and to obtain from his infinite goodness all that is necessary for your corporal and spiritual needs. Behold the end for which it is necessary to offer to God the holy sacrifice of the mass; after which He gives you the same victim that you have offered to his divine majesty, to nourish your soul, and preserve you in this land of exile. Oh, what an offering! oh, what food! God is worthy of the offering, but are you worthy of such nourishment?

2d Point. The most necessary preparation for a participation in the divine mystery is, to be in charity with all men. He who has in his heart hatred towards his fellow being is not a partici pant in the graces of the sacrifice of the mass; he has no part in this sacrament of love; for him the blood of the Son of God cries not for mercy but for vengeance. When you bring your gift to the altar, and remember that your brother has aught against you, leave it, and go from the holy table to be reconciled with him.

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

Never will you be united to the Son of God by grace if you are not united to your neighbor by charity. Pray to-day for all your enemies. Offer to God the sacrifice of the mass, and your communion for them.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"And He spoke also this parable to some who trusted in themselves as just, and despised others." *St. Luke*, xviii.

"The Pharisee standing, prayed thus with himself: O God, I give thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, nor such as this publican." *St. Luke*, xviii.

"Men shall be lovers of themselves . . . and lovers of pleasures, more than of God. Having an appearance, indeed, of piety, but denying the power thereof." 2 *Timothy*, iii.

"To do mercy and judgment, pleaseth the Lord more than victims." *Proverbs*, xxi.

"And when you stretch forth your hands, I will turn my eyes away from you: and when you multiply prayer, I will not hear: for your hands are full of blood." *Isaias*, i.

"Wash yourselves: be clean: take away the evil of your devices from my eyes: cease to do perversely." *Ibid.*

FIFTH TUESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON PURITY OF INTENTION CONTRASTED WITH THE VANITY OF THE PHARISEES.

1st Point. Christian soul, nothing is ever lost in the service of God. Instead of suffering loss, you will gain even more than you expect. To work for God, is to work for yourself. Your affairs will never prosper more than when you are attending to those of God. Some serve Him for the good it brings, but this service is not so profitable as that which proceeds alone from love. It is profitable at all times, and under all circumstances, to serve God, but it is never more so than when a soul seeks not its own profit.

2d Point. True love contents itself with loving, the object of its love serving as a recompense. The love which seeks any thing with God, is suspicious; love which expects any thing but God, is mercenary; love which finds a relish in any thing but God, is weak and languishing. But that love which seeks God alone, ex-

pects only God, works only for God, delights in God, and is contented with God, is perfect.

3D POINT. Working for gain, is an interested love; working to become perfect, is a love which is not purified; working to please God, is a thriving love; working because God pleases, is the perfection and consummation of love. Do you love God? Do you labor for God? Do you serve God, that you may save your soul? This is good. Is it that you may become perfect? This is better. Is it to please God? This is most noble. Is it because you delight only in God? This is the perfection of love.

Oh, my God! I wished to love Thee from the first, but I wandered astray. I loved myself too much to love Thee as I ought. It is necessary to learn to serve Thee, that I may learn to love Thee aright. It is necessary for my soul to become thy servant, in order to become thy spouse. It is necessary for me to kiss thy sacred feet, and bathe them with many tears, before I can hope to repose, like the beloved disciple, on thy bosom. I will, henceforward, work for heaven, that my heart may become detached from the world. My recompense will be thy love. When Thou withdrawest thyself from me, I will still labor in hope, still work only through love. Oh, I shall be immeasurably rich, when I work only for Thee. I shall be perfect, when my desire is to serve and please only Thee. My happiness will be full, when I love only Thee.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"With my whole heart have I sought after Thee: let me not stray from thy commandments." *Psalm* cxviii.

"For what have I in heaven? And besides Thee, what do I desire upon earth?" *Psalm* lxxii.

"Let no man seek his own." 1 *Corinthians*, x.

"Nor sought we glory of men." 1 *Thessalonians*, ii.

"Even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who proveth our hearts." *Ibid.*

FIFTH WEDNESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE MARKS OF A PURE INTENTION.

1ST POINT. The signs of a pure intention are these: If you neither worry, nor work in a hurry; if you work in secret as well as in public; if you work as faithfully without witnesses as

when the eyes of men are upon you; if you work as if there were only God and yourself in the world; if you rejoice when others work more than you do; if you are not angry when interrupted in your work; if it is a matter of indifference to you, to continue it or to abandon it; if you are satisfied when your work does not succeed!

If you love equally good and bad success; if you do little things with as much care as great; if you are willing to do little, or much, according to the rule of your superiors; if you expect neither pain nor recompense for your labors; if you are not incited to action by reflections on the esteem of men; if you give *all* the glory to God; if praise or contempt, glory or shame, are alike indifferent to you: these are the marks by which you may judge whether or no you work with a pure intention. Examine yourself on each of these articles.

2D POINT. For whom do you work? Is it for God? Is it for the world? Is it to satisfy God, or to satisfy yourself? Do you work in peace, without disquietude, and without sadness of heart? Are you as faithful to acquit yourself of your duties in private as in public? Do you feel no mortification when others succeed as well or better than yourself? Are you not troubled and irritated whenever you are interrupted? Are you ready to do little or much, to do all or nothing? Do you preserve an even temper, in bad as well as in good success? Do you look for praise from men?

Oh, my God! I confess, to my bitter grief and confusion, that I have labored much, and gained nothing. I have taken much pains and trouble to gain my ends, but have amassed nothing. I have traversed much of the road, but have not advanced towards success. I have labored much for the world, and done nothing for heaven. I have toiled unceasingly for my body, and neglected my soul; worked for time, and not for eternity; worked for myself, and not for God.

Is this just? No, oh my God! Since I was created only for Thee, I desire only to live for Thee. Since I subsist only by Thee, I desire to work only for Thee. I expect no other recompense than the honor of having served Thee; no other recompense for my love than the pleasure of having loved Thee. And, notwithstanding however much I may not desire recompense, Thou art so good and liberal that I cannot serve Thee without obtaining it. If I seek only Thee, not only wilt Thou bestow on me thy goods, but even give me thyself.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Is thy heart right as my heart *is* with thy heart?" 4 *Kings*, x.

"Whom seek ye? They answered him: Jesus of Nazareth." *St. John*, xviii.

"Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?" *St. John*, xx.

"Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and art troubled about many things." *St. Luke*, x.

"If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing." *St. John*, viii.

"Now, to the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen." 1 *Timothy*, i.

FIFTH THURSDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON MEEKNESS AND ANGER.

1st Point. A meek and quiet spirit renders a person happy. An angry and turbulent spirit renders one miserable. Meekness is a sign of wisdom; anger, of folly. Every one shuns a passionate man. Every one loves and respects one who is charitable and mild. To become holy, it is necessary, first, to become meek.

To be mild and peaceable, with every passion under subjection, is to be a man, a king, a conqueror, a Christian. To be passionate, and easily moved to anger, is to be a brute, a slave, and a pagan. The first carry with them marks of predestination; the latter, marks of reprobation. Do wolves enter into heaven? The Shepherd will only receive sheep into his fold, because they are the most mild and gentle of all creatures.

2d Point. A man who is governed by mildness and peace resembles God, who is always tranquil; he resembles Jesus, who was the meekest and most gentle of all men; he is the master of his passions; he lives in a state of impassibility and innocence; he enjoys a profound peace; He is always even and serene, and equal to all that may happen; the Holy Ghost rests and reigns in his heart; grace establishes her empire therein; God contemplates in him his own image as in a mirror; He speaks often to him, because his passions are silenced; He treats him with favor, and deals gently with him, because he is mild and gracious to-

wards others; He pardons him his sins. because he does not feel or cherish resentment; He bears with his infirmities, because he bears sweetly with the faults and shortcomings of his neighbor; He loads him with graces, because He finds in him nothing to resist them.

3d Point. The angry and passionate man is like unto a devil, always turbulent and grievous to those who deal with him; he is the slave of his passions, and insupportable to all; he is feared and avoided, like a ferocious beast: he is never at rest, nor does he allow others to be so; he drives the Holy Ghost out of his heart, disturbs and overthrows the kingdom of his grace, and gives entrance to devils therein, who love confusion and disorder; he spares none, God will not spare him; he gives rest to none, God will not impart it to him. On the contrary, He will treat him with rigor, make him feel the effects of his anger, reprove him with severity, and, should he ever repent, pardon him with difficulty.

Oh Jesus! the most patient and meek of all men, have compassion on my angry and turbulent heart. Oh mild Lamb of God! Thou who wast led to the slaughter without a word of complaint, make me patient and sweet like Thee. Oh Good Shepherd! who dost separate the wolves from thy flock, how canst Thou let me remain with thy sheep? Oh! change my nature that I may become truly one of thy fold—one of thy predestined. Make me mild and gentle, meek and humble of heart, that thy spirit may abide in me.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Be not quickly angry; for anger resteth in the bosom of fools." *Eccles.* vii.

"He will guide the mild in judgment; He will teach the meek in his ways." *Psalm* xxiv.

"An evil man always seeketh quarrels: but a cruel angel shall be sent against him." *Proverbs*, xvii.

"The meek shall inherit the land, and shall delight in abundance of peace." *Psalm* xxxvi.

"Whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be guilty of the judgment." *St. Matt.* v.

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land." *Ibid.*

FIFTH FRIDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

REMEDIES AGAINST ANGER.

1st Point. To be meek it is necessary to be humble; anger arises from pride. To be meek it is necessary to hate one's self; anger arises from self-love. To be meek it is necessary to detach yourself from creatures; anger arises from some such attachment. Those who are lenient towards themselves, are commonly severe towards others. Those who are meek and gentle towards others, are generally austere towards themselves. Those who pardon all in themselves forgive nothing in others.

2d Point. What do you gain by putting yourself into a passion? You injure the health of your body, inflict deadly wounds on your soul, drive from it the Holy Ghost, and abandon it to the power of devils. You afflict and pain your family, make your house a hell, advance not your affairs, but rather ruin them, and instead of remedying the evil you have done, increase it. Is your course productive of peace, or any other good? Can one evil cure another?

3d Point. Contemplate your image in a mirror, when your soul is tossed by fury and your countenance distorted by evil passions, and you will behold a human being transformed into a beast; you will see this creature, who was bought with the blood of Jesus Christ, forgetful of all holy things, roar like a wolf, foam like a horse, bark like a dog, tear and toss like a wild hog, hiss like a serpent, and gnash his teeth like one of the damned. You will see one who is as furious as the lion, cruel as the tiger, and as restless and agitated as one possessed. Is this the image of a Christian? Are these marks of the predestined?

FIFTH SATURDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE FOOLISHNESS OF ANGER.

1st Point. What reasons have you for anger? Does not God suffer any thing from you? Do you not make others suffer likewise? Why should you not suffer a little as well? Why expect to be treated with deference by the whole world? Have you not

a thousand times, merited hell? Have you not deserved to be there long ago, burning in its unquenchable flames? In that place of misery and eternal tears, instead of having whatever you desire, all that you most fear and loathe will come upon you. Are you not worthy of all evils, and unworthy of all good? Have you not merited hell? Why, then, do you fly into a passion when some one refuses to do you a favor, or indulge in anger when they do you evil?

2d Point. But what wrong have they done you? Does not your success and prosperity belong to God? Can He not give or take it, whenever it suits his good pleasure? Who can injure a hair of your head without his permission? Who are you, to oppose yourself to the order of God's providence? What do you expect to gain by making war against Him? What mercy can you expect from Him, when you refuse to show it to others?

3d Point. O Lord my God, I confess that I am wrong. It is impossible for any one to do me as much evil as I deserve; why should not men outrage and injure me, since I have outraged and insulted Thee? It is but just that they should be incessantly opposed to my will, since I have always opposed myself to thine. Oh, I deserve to be despised, since I have despised and dishonored Thee! oh, I deserve to be afflicted, since I have grieved and offended Thee without reason and without measure.

O meek and lowly Jesus, give me grace to imitate thy mildness and patience. Alas, I am not the master of my heart or passions! My heart kindles and takes fire without thought; my passions revolt against reason. All that I can do is to keep down the tempest that rages within me. Oh, this is difficult, and contrary to my inclinations; it is, notwithstanding, what I am resolved to do: I will never speak when I am angry; I will keep silence, in the trouble and commotion of my heart, and by this means, with thy grace to aid me, I will eventually triumph over the devil and my angry passions.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"A fool immediately showeth his anger; but he that dissembleth injuries is wise." *Proverbs*, xii.

"Why art thou angry? and why is thy countenance fallen?" *Genesis*, iv.

"Let not your heart be troubled." *St. John*, xiv.

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land." *St. Matt.* v.

"I was troubled, and I spoke not." *Psalm* lxxvi.

"Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart." *St. Matt.* xi.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE GOSPEL. *St. Mark*, viii. 1–9.

"At that time, when there was a great multitude with Jesus, and had nothing to eat, calling his disciples together, he said to them: I have compassion on the multitude; for, behold, they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat; and if I send them away fasting to their own home, they will faint in the way: for some of them came from afar off. And his disciples answered Him: From whence can any one fill them here with bread in the wilderness? And he asked them: How many loaves have ye? Who said, Seven. And He commanded the people to sit down on the ground; and taking the seven loaves, giving thanks, he broke, and gave to his disciples to set before them, and they set them before the people. And they had a few little fishes; and He blessed them, and commanded them to be set before them. And they did eat, and were filled, and they took up that which was left of the fragments seven baskets. And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and He sent them away."

Meditation.

ON THE GOSPEL.

1ST POINT. Admire the devotion and confidence of these good people, who followed our Lord three days and nights in the desert, without giving themselves any concern about where they were going, what they were to eat, or where they would lodge. They abandoned themselves to the guidance of Jesus, and would rather have died at his feet than to have left Him. They did not complain of the length of the road, or murmur like the Jews when Moses led them into the desert. Every consideration was forgotten in the delight they felt at hearing his voice and being in his company. They went after Him, following his footsteps like a flock of sheep with their shepherd. Alas, how few follow Jesus into the desert! how few place their trust in Him, and abandon themselves to his providence! On the contrary, how many complain of the past and are troubled for the future. Listen to the

words of our divine Lord: "*Whosoever will be my disciple, must take up the cross and follow me.*"

2D POINT. Jesus had compassion on the multitude, who had been fasting three days with Him in the desert. "*If I send them away fasting,*" saith He, "*to their own homes, they will faint in the way: for some of them came from afar off.*" Oh Jesus, how filled with tenderness, mildness, and charity is thy Sacred Heart! He cannot see the miseries of mankind without being moved with compassion. He sees every day, hour, and moment, our sufferings; and when the right time comes, He assists us. When every thing tempts us to despair, it is then we must hope the more, for it is in such straits as these that He works miracles. It was necessary for the multitude to have been three days in the desert, that his Providence might be more apparent, and his divine power better known. It was necessary that the Egyptian flour should be entirely consumed before manna descended from heaven. If you do not receive heavenly consolation, it is, without doubt, because you seek too ardently your solace on earth. If Jesus has not wrought miracles in your behalf, it is because you have not hoped or confided in Him. "*I have compassion on the multitude,*" saith He, "*for behold, they have been with me three days;*" that is to say, they have attached themselves to me, and depend on my care. Rest, then, Christian soul, on the Providence of God, and you shall never want.

3D POINT. That soul which trusts in God, and casts its whole care on Him, sustains, in a manner, and defends his divine Providence, and proves, beyond dispute, that He believes Him to be a good, wise, and powerful God, who watches over all the spiritual and corporal needs of his creatures. There are, comparatively, but few Christians who thus defend his Providence. Alas! how many act as if there were no such thing; or, as if they were afraid to abandon themselves to the guidance thereof. One believes himself ruined unless human wisdom can be brought to aid him; he rests only on its spirit, its prudence, its suggestions, and its works, all the time forgetting to cast his cares on God, and depend for support on his goodness. He seeks his friends among those who have power, riches, and credit; but he comes not to Jesus Christ, who alone knows all the bitterness of our miseries, and has the power and will to deliver us from our difficulties. You say you are poor! Do you follow Jesus in the desert? Do you abandon yourself to his Providence? Do you ever distrust his wisdom, his power, or his goodness?*

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

SIXTH MONDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE MIRACLE RELATED IN THE GOSPEL.

1st Point. Jesus asked his disciples: "*How many loaves have you? who said: Seven.*" It is the way of his divine wisdom, to let us feel and understand our own miseries before he aids us. After He had blessed the loaves presented to Him by the disciples, He multiplied them by his miraculous power, and gave them to his faithful servants to distribute among the people. Although they, also, were hungry, they did not hesitate a moment to obey his commands. They gave freely to all, without stint or reserve. God distributes temporal goods to the poor by the hands of the rich, who are the stewards or ministers of his Providence. He allows them to appropriate what is necessary for themselves, but it is his will for the surplus to be distributed among the poor. The disciples had only seven barley loaves wherewith to supply their own necessities. If they had selfishly desired to reserve these for their own use what would the Son of God have done? He would have *raised a table in the wilderness* for these people, at which the disciples would have been forbidden to sit down; He would have spread thereon a feast, of which they could not have partaken. Oh, ye who are rich, give of the abundance which God has so liberally bestowed on you! Waste not your means in luxurious or riotous living, because He will require a strict account of your stewardship; and if you refuse your superfluous possessions to the poor, He will assuredly deprive you of all.

2d Point. Jesus multiplied the bread only in the desert. This wonderful miracle was a figure of that which He accomplishes every day on the altars of the Church, whereby He multiplies the eucharistic bread, which is his sacred body and blood. That we may eat, and be filled, it is necessary that we should retire from the world and its distractions; sit at the feet of Jesus that we may hear and meditate on his word; withdraw ourselves from all human consolations, and be fasting. It is in solitude that God loves to reveal himself, and makes the soul feel and taste the sweetness of the heavenly manna that He provides for it. It is herein that He gives rest and refreshment to all who follow and depend on Him. The ambitious man dies of hunger; the avaricious man of an insatiable desire to amass treasures; and the im-

pure are consumed by the fire of their own lusts; they consort and eat with bestial natures like their own; their food turns to bitterness on their lips; their joys vanish, and they perish. Oh, happy are the poor in spirit! they eat the bread of angels; they are satisfied, and desire no more after partaking of the mystical feast. If you are not comforted after your devotions, rest assured that you have sought some other thing than God. You are like the Jews in the desert, who were disgusted with the manna and sighed for the flesh-pots of Egypt.

3D POINT. "*They gathered seven baskets full of the fragments that were left.*" It is thus that God multiplies the goods of the charitable. Give fearlessly, then, to the poor and you shall gather in more than you give. It is seed, which you cast into the earth, that will bring forth an hundredfold. After the disciples went into the ship with our divine Lord, they remembered that they were without bread, and were disturbed thereat. Ah, how did Jesus rebuke their want of faith? "*Why do you reason,*" saith He to them, "*because you have no bread? Do you not yet know or understand? Have you still your hearts blinded? Having eyes you see not, and having ears you hear not. Neither do you remember. When I broke the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took you up? They say to Him: Twelve. And when the seven loaves among four thousand, how many baskets of fragments took you up? And they say to Him: Seven. And He said to them: How do you not yet understand?*" Incomprehensible blindness of man, who constantly forgets the blessings of God, and falls in a little while into his ordinary want of faith and hope in his word? Is not this your spirit? Do you not fall into these defects? Do you not, like Judas, distrust the divine goodness, and secretly receive the price of blood? Oh Judas! you did not profit by your avarice; you returned the silver so unjustly acquired, and all your goods were only enough to buy the cord that strangled you.

Come, my well-beloved, let us go into the desert; there I will discourse with your heart, and cause you to rest on my bosom; there I will nourish you, and lavish on you the riches of my grace. The food that I will give you is only a loaf of barley, and not any delicate meat, but, when blessed by my hand, you will find the taste of heaven in it.

I come, my well-beloved, at thy bidding. I enter, with joy, into this sacred solitude of body, mind, and heart. All that nature delights in is wanting in this desert, but I fear not, because my good Shepherd leads me. I have been two days on the road, the

first I did penance for my sins; the second I spent in doing good works; and what remains for me now, my sweet Lord, but to rest on thy bosom; what is left but for Thee to fill my heart and satisfy me by thy presence. Oh, sweet Jesus, when wilt Thou make me return to this holy solitude wherein my soul has found such ineffable refreshment? When wilt Thou speak to my heart? When wilt Thou give me this celestial manna to eat? When shall we sing together this beautiful canticle of love: "*My beloved to me and I to Him, who feedeth among the lilies.*" He is all to me, and I am all to Him. He is all for me, and I am all for Him.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"And I am not troubled, following thee for my pastor." *Jeremias*, xvii.

"The Lord is my shepherd, and I shall want nothing. He hath set me in a place of pasture." *Psalm* xxii.

"They that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall take wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint." *Isaias*, xl.

"Trust in the Lord, and do good, and dwell in the land, and thou shalt be fed with its riches." *Psalm* xxxvi.

"None of them that wait on thee shall be confounded." *Psalm* xxiv.

"Our soul waiteth for the Lord: for He is our helper, and protector." *Psalm* xxxii.

"The poor shall eat, and shall be filled." *Psalm* xxi.

"And the Lord of hosts shall make unto all people in this mountain, a feast of fat things, a feast of wine, of fat things full of marrow, of wine purified from the lees." *Isaias*, xxv.

SIXTH TUESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON HOPE AND CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

1st Point. He who hopes in God acknowledges Him as the great first cause, and recognizes in Him a being endowed with infinite perfection; he allows himself to be guided by his wisdom, he leans on his power, confides in his goodness, abandons himself to his mercy, depends on his providence, and is assured of his love. Hope renders us like unto God; it makes the weak strong, the poor rich, the miserable happy.

2d Point. There is never more reason to hope than when all seems to fail, or to be courageous than when all appears the most appalling, or to abandon ourselves to God than when He seems to have abandoned us. God gives his protection to those who despair of their own; He gives his power to those who recognize their own weakness, and imparts his treasures to those who acknowledge their own poverty.

3d Point. If you are without support God will sustain you; if you are unaided by human power, that which is divine will bear you up. Renounce your own judgment and the wisdom of God will govern and enlighten you; strip yourself of all strength and the power of God will support you; empty yourself of yourself and the perfect love of God will fill you with his graces and benedictions.

Oh, all-powerful God, what am I, and what art Thou? Thou hast always been, I am only nothingness; Thou art strong and I am weak; Thou art the truth and I am but a passing shadow; Thou art light and I am darkness; Thou art infinite holiness and I am malice.

Oh my God! my hope! I abandon myself entirely to Thee; I depend on and rest in thee; Thou art my guide and my shepherd; I can neither lose myself, or fall, or go astray, if I place my whole confidence in Thee.

To know God without feeling a sense of our own misery, is to be presumptuous. To know our own misery, without knowing God, is to despair. To know the abyss of our own misery, and to know also the abyss of the mercy of God, is what makes the hope and joy of the saints. Jesus Christ is not only God, but a Mediator and Saviour, who is full of mercy and compassion for all poor sinners.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Who is this that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning upon her beloved?" *Canticles*, viii.

"They that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall take wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint." *Isaias*, xl.

"When his wrath shall be kindled in a short time, blessed are all they that trust in him." *Psalm* ii.

"Charge the rich of this world, not to be high-minded, nor to hope in uncertain riches, but in the living God (who giveth us abundantly all things to enjoy.") 1 *Timothy*, vi.

SIXTH WEDNESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE DRYNESS AND ARIDITY OF THE DESERT.

1st Point. I believe that which I see, hope for what I can do, and love whatever pleases me most. I believe in the midst of light; I hope amidst strength; I love when consolations abound. Behold the life of the senses.

I believe that which I do not see; hope for what I cannot acquire; love those things that are displeasing and opposed to nature. I believe in darkness, I hope in weakness, and love in grief. Behold the life of the spirit.

2d Point. There is a time to speak, and a time for silence; a time to laugh, and a time to weep; a time for summer, and a time for winter; a time for peace, and a time for war; a time for consolation, and a time for desolation.

3d Point. Winter is as necessary to the earth as summer; night as day; and rain as sunshine. The soul delights in consolation, but deserves it not, unless it is proved by temptation. It is in the gloom that faith shines with lustre; it is in desolation that the soul's trust in God is tested, and in affliction that its love is made known.

Oh my God, I fear that my love is natural and sensual; it is impure and interested. I do not adore Thee in spirit, since I seek only the gratification of my senses; I have not led a supernatural life, since I have not triumphed over my natural inclinations; I have not, to the present time, merited any thing, since I have neither done nor suffered any thing contrary to my own will.

Oh happy state, wherein the soul contemplates God; hopes in, loves Him, and works for him independent of the senses. It is, in a manner, beholding Him without species; being united to Him without reserve, and subsisting in Him; it is to lead a supernatural life; it is the life and reign of Jesus Christ in the soul.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Whence then should we have so many loaves in the desert, as to fill so great a multitude?" *St. Matt.* xv.

"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but justice and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." *Romans*, xiv.

"They shall be scattered abroad to eat, and shall murmur if they are not filled." *Psalm* lviii.

"But I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go: for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you: but if I go, I will send him to you." *St. John*, xvi.

"God is a Spirit; and they that adore Him, must adore Him in spirit and in truth." *St. John*, iv.

SIXTH THURSDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE CARE OF OUR SALVATION.

1st Point. The multitude who followed Jesus into the desert, leaving behind them all earthly interests and cares, preferred the way of salvation to all temporal advantages.

Consider the following truths, and apply them to your own conscience:

My salvation is my affair alone, and ought to be the greatest and only concern of my life. Since it is my own affair, I ought to labor unceasingly for it; since it is my only affair, I ought to work only to secure it; since it is the most important of all affairs, I ought to apply to its accomplishment all the energies of my mind, heart, and soul.

2d Point. God has thought from all eternity of this affair; it has occupied his mind from the beginning. His divine Son came into the world for this affair; all the time He was on earth, He worked for this affair; He died on the cross to consummate this affair. Our good angels occupy themselves exclusively with this affair. All the universe lives and moves to accomplish this affair.

3d Point. All my happiness depends on this affair. All of time and eternity revolve on this affair. All the spirits of hell labor for the ruin of this affair. I cannot succeed in this affair without a careful perseverance therein. When death comes, I can no longer attend to this affair. Am I, then, without sense or judgment, if I devote my thoughts and time to any other affair?

Notwithstanding all this, I neglect it. I think of every thing but saving my soul. I disturb myself about every thing except my salvation. Oh, I wish, henceforth, to think only of this affair; labor all the remainder of my days for this affair; and leave all to attend to this affair.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"But one thing is necessary." *St. Luke*, x.

"For what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul." *St. Matt.* xvi.

"What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" *Ibid.*

"But be thou vigilant: labor in all things." 2 *Timothy*, iv.

"Have pity on thy own soul, pleasing God, and contain thyself." *Ecclesiasticus*, xxx.

SIXTH FRIDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE EXCELLENCE OF ABANDONING ONE'S SELF TO THE GUIDANCE OF GOD.

1st Point. Happy is he who places his trust in God, and abandons himself to his divine providence; allows himself to be conducted by his wisdom, and confides in his infinite goodness. Nothing can harm him, because he is under the protection of an all-powerful God; nothing can shake him, because he leans on immovable strength; and nothing is capable of opposing his desires, because he wishes only for what God desires for him. All happens according to his will, because the will of God is his.

2d Point. Such a one is secure amidst tempests, tranquil under persecution, works without weariness, is vigilant without sadness, and does every thing without inquietude, because God is his pilot, his Father, and his shepherd, his protection and defence, his fortress and refuge. He leans on his arm and reposes under the shadow of his providence. His only care is to please Him, and he thinks only how he may satisfy Him.

3d Point. God never abandons a soul which abandons itself to Him. He holds it in especial remembrance; it is dearer to Him than the rest of his creatures; He watches when it sleeps; works when it rests; conducts it with his own right hand; bears it up in its weakness; attends to its prayers, anticipates its desires, and causes all its enterprises to succeed; provides for its every need, and soothes its every pang.

My daughter, said Jesus to a holy soul: Think of me, and I will think of thee; do my will, and I will do thine; make my interests thine, and I will adopt thine as my own; give thyself no

trouble, and desire nothing; give me thy heart, and I will give Thee mine.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"The lip of truth shall be steadfast forever." *Proverbs*, xii.

"Whatsoever shall befall the just man, it shall not make him sad." *Ibid.*

"He is near that justifieth me: who will contend with me?" *Isaias*, l.

"Behold the Lord God *is* my helper: who is he that shall condemn me?" *Ibid.*

"To Thee is the poor man left: Thou will be a helper to the orphan." *Psalm* ix.

"For I know whom I have believed: and I am certain that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day." 2 *Timothy*, i.

SIXTH SATURDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE STATE OF A SOUL THAT ABANDONS ITSELF TO GOD.

1st Point. I do not know whether I shall be lost or saved; I do not know whether I do good or evil; I do not know whether I advance or retrograde. I do not know what to say; I know not what to think; but in the consolation of my heart, and in the silence of my lips I hold counsel with my soul, and cry incessantly to God: I desire only Thee; I abandon myself to Thee, O Lord!

2d Point. My friends betray me, my enemies persecute me. They have stripped me of my goods; they have calumniated and blackened my character. I am consumed with grief, misery, and poverty; I seek a friend to console me, but find none; I have lost all relish for devotion; I find no consolation in my griefs; I have no strength in the hour of temptation, no light to disperse my doubts, no support in my weakness, no courage in my labors. I know not what to do, or what to perform. All that I can do in my affliction is to say: O my God, I desire only Thee; O my God, I abandon myself to Thee.

3d Point. Am I in a state of grace or a state of sin? am I worthy of hatred? am I worthy of love? Shall I go hence in peace? shall I depart without hope? shall I go to heaven? shall I be thrust into hell? All this is uncertain; but it shall not move

or disturb me, for I will place all my trust in God; I will confide in his mercy, lean on the merits of his Son and not on mine; I will commend my spirit into his hands; I will leave to Him the care of my salvation and my eternity; and still say to Him with filial confidence: My God, I desire only Thee; my God, I abandon myself to Thee.

4TH POINT. I may live, I may die; I may die soon, or have length of days; I may have health, I may have sickness; may be rich, may be poor; may find much consolation, may find only affliction; may be esteemed, may be despised; may be sought after, may be abandoned; may be at peace, or may be obliged to contend. But all this is indifferent to me; thy pleasure, my God, shall be mine; thy will shall be my pleasure. All my darkness will be dispersed, all my fears vanish, all my passions calmed and appeased, when I say to Thee with my whole heart: My God, I desire only Thee; I abandon myself to Thee.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Into thy hands I commend my spirit: Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, the God of truth." *Psalm* xxx.

"In peace, in the self-same, I will sleep, and I will rest: for Thou, O Lord, singularly hast settled me in hope." *Psalm* iv.

"I sought the Lord, and He heard me; and He delivered me from all my troubles." *Psalm* xxxiii.

"I have become as a vessel that is destroyed." *Psalm* xxx.

"I will not leave Thee, neither will I forsake Thee." *Hebrews*, xiii.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE GOSPEL. *St. Matt.* vii. 15–21.

"At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. By their fruits you shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and the evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits you shall know them. Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom

of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heav en, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Meditation.

ON THE GOSPEL.

1st Point. "*Beware of false prophets.*" The world is full of them. Teachers of false doctrine and hypocrites are the most dangerous. They appear like sheep, but inwardly they are raven ing wolves. All heretics who have appeared in the Church have worn a mask of reform, piety, and austerity. Error and vice do not reveal themselves. Error wraps itself in the mantle of truth, and vice clothes itself in the garb of piety. Do not be astonished at these plausible and fair appearances, all this glitter of reform and of sanctity; for, as says St. Paul, Satan can transform him self into an angel of light. How, then, shall I know the enemy of souls? The grace of God within you, the pastors of the Church, the voice of your superiors, and the evil doings of these false prophets, will reveal him to you.

2d Point. True prophets derive their mission from God; those who are false come of themselves. They preach and teach with out a divine authority. "*They*," says St. Paul, "*creep into houses, and lead captives silly women loaden with sins, who are led away with divers desires: always learning and never attaining to the knowledge of the truth: having an appearance of piety, but deny ing the power thereof: lovers of themselves; covetous, haughty, proud, blasphemers, ungrateful, wicked; without affection, without peace; slanderers, incontinent, unmerciful, without kindness, trait ors, stubborn, puffed up, and lovers of pleasure more than God.*" Beware of these false teachers. Attach yourself to the guidance of the Church, and follow the way marked out by those who gov ern it, and you will never wander astray.

3d Point. Notwithstanding the care taken by these false teach ers to disguise themselves, their doctrines and manners betray them. Their doctrine is always new, and consequently false; their manners and lives are apparently well regulated, but their virtue is all dissimulation and hypocrisy. The foundation of all virtue is humility, and they possess it not; they are proud, blind, and self-opinionated; they despise all who do not become slaves to their opinions; they never wish to renounce the evidence of their senses or their judgment, or yield obedience to the dogmas and precepts of the Church. Be humble and obedient; avoid singularity and novelties, and you will never fall into error.

4TH POINT. There are two false prophets who often deceive you: self-love and self-will. These will inspire you with sentiments contrary to the guidance of God, under pretext of greater protection. Know them by their effects: false inspirations disturb and grieve the heart and soul; they love novelty and singularity; they render the soul haughty, proud, and subservient to the senses; they beguile it from the order of obedience, and give it a contempt for superiors.

Divine inspirations enter the soul sweetly and produce peace therein, also union, humility, sweetness, and obedience. The signs of these are, to be willing to do or not to do according to the divine will, to gain or lose, obtain our desires or be frustrated in them, as God permits. O my God, defend me from these false prophets, who come under the appearances of sanctity and perfection, and who wish to lead me astray from the guidance of my superiors.*

SEVENTH MONDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1ST POINT. "*A good tree bringeth forth good fruits, and an evil tree bringeth forth evil fruits.*" Oh, how excellent and life-giving is the tree of the holy sacrament of the altar! We are the evil trees, which produce only fruits of iniquity. When we are grafted with the communion of the fair tree of life, when we have planted it in the midst of our hearts, it produces good fruits, worthy of eternal life. Oh, if we would communicate more frequently, we should not be subject to so many vices as we are! Oh, if we would communicate more frequently, we would soon perceive a change in our lives!

2D POINT. A tree, to bring forth good fruits, ought to be deeply rooted in good earth, near a stream of water; a soul, to bring forth the fruits of life, ought to be deeply rooted and grounded in humility; it ought to maintain itself in good resolutions, to enable it to resist the winds and tempests. It ought to avoid all proximate occasions of sin, bathe often in the sacred waters of penance, and draw on itself, like the refreshing dews of morning, the grace and benediction of God.

3D POINT. "*The tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be*

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

cut down, and shall be cast into the fire." Oh, terrible sentence! It is not enough to bring forth fruit; but we must bring forth good fruits, healthy, ripe, and worthy of God. What are the fruits of your life? what good works have you wrought? in what manner and with what fervor have you acquitted yourself of your duties? "*Behold,*" saith our Lord, "*these three years I come, seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and I find none. Cut it down, therefore; why cumbereth it the ground?*" Learn that this same sentence may be pronounced on you, if you do not change your life, and do more good than you have done heretofore.

O God of my soul, I confess that I have too long abused thy graces, and that I deserve to be cut off from the body of thy Church, the number of the living, and to be forever cast into the flames of hell. But I implore Thee to wait a little longer. I will begin forthwith to work for my salvation, and repair the time I have lost by works of sincere repentance. Only give thy blessing to this tree, which has hitherto been so barren, and Thou shalt see it loaded with blossoms and fruit.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"For such false apostles are deceitful workmen, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself transformeth himself into an angel of light." 2 *Cor.* xi.

"Men shall be lovers of themselves, covetous, haughty, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful and wicked, without affection, without peace; slanderous, incontinent, unmerciful, without kindness, traitors, stubborn, puffed up, and lovers of pleasure, more than of God: having an appearance of piety, but denying the power thereof. For of this sort are they who creep into houses, and lead captive silly women loaded with sins, who are led away by divers desires: ever learning, and never attaining to the knowledge of the truth." 2 *Timothy*, iii.

"Thus saith the Lord of hosts: Hearken not to the words of the prophets that prophesy to you, and deceive you: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord." *Jeremias*, xxiii.

"If any man come to you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into the house, nor say to him God speed thee. For he that sayeth to him, God speed thee, communicateth with his wicked works." 2 *John*, i.

"For now the axe is laid to the foot of the trees. Every tree, therefore, that doth not yield good fruit, shall be cut down and cast into the fire." *St. Matt.* iii.

SEVENTH TUESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE NECESSITY OF GOOD WORKS.

1st Point. What is a Christian without good works? A tree without fruit, which shall soon be cut down and cast into the fire; a lamp without oil, which shall soon be extinguished; earth which brings forth nothing, and which is cursed by Him who has tried in vain to make it fruitful. His faith is sterile, he is sick or, rather, dead. He who does nothing, believes nothing; he who believes, and lives not according to his belief, shall be judged and condemned by his own acts.

2d Point. The more light you have received, the more guilty you are if you have not followed it. Much shall be demanded of him who has received much. Sterility in a Christian is iniquity. Did not Jesus Christ condemn the barren fig-tree to the flames? Did He take not away the talent from him who had buried it, and reward him who had profited by his?

3d Point. Faith saves or damns us, makes us better or worse. Believing good and doing evil, is to be condemned before we are judged. He who does not practise what he believes, ere long ceases to believe in that which he does not do. Faith does not long survive the death of charity. The heart debauches the spirit; love corrupts judgment; passion blinds judgment. One judges according to his love, and is easily persuaded that what he loves is good, what he does not love is bad, what he loves is true, and what he does not love is false.

4th Point. Do you not wish to lose faith? preserve charity. Do you wish for living faith? have an ardent charity. Do you desire to believe that which you do not see? do that which does not please nature. Do you wish to know the truth? let your actions be governed by charity. We only know that we live, by the movements of our body: a body no longer lives when it can no longer act. Your faith is dead if it does not act. Your charity is without life if it is without motion.

Christian soul! perform good works; let them be abundant, and done in a state of grace. Do them for a good end; do them promptly, without lukewarmness or indifference. Do as much good as you have done evil. Do all that you can, and feel that you have done but little. "*Work while it is day, for soon the night cometh, when no man shall work.*"

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to render to every man according to his works." *Apocalypse*, xxii.

"Do you see that by works a man is justified; and not by faith only?" *St. James*, ii.

"For as the body without the spirit is dead; so also faith without works is dead." *Ibid.*

"Be mindful, therefore, from whence thou art fallen: and do penance, and do thy first works. Or else I come to thee, and will move thy candlestick out of its place, except thou do penance." *Apocalypse*, ii.

SEVENTH WEDNESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE NECESSITY OF ALL OUR ACTIONS BEING GOOD.

1st Point. Our works are our fruits; but it is necessary that they should be good, and worthy of God. It is not enough to perform good actions, but it is essential to do them well. It is necessary to engage in them with all your mind and heart.

2d Point. Whatever you do, keep these thoughts in view. God desires to be honored by me through this action; his eye is on me while I am engaged in this action; He has attached a particular grace to this action; He tests the sincerity of my love by this action.

By this action I can render Him service for all the good He has done me. His wisdom has regulated this action from all eternity; his infinite greatness elevates this action; his adorable sanctity consecrates this action; his sovereign will commands this action; his love blesses and desires this action.

My peace depends on this action; my merit is involved in this action; my perfection is connected with this action; I shall offend God if I am wanting in this action; my salvation, perhaps, depends on this action; I must, then, apply myself diligently to do this action well.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Do that which is pleasing and good in the sight of the Lord, that it may be well with thee." *Deuteronomy*, vi.

"Give to the Most High according to what He hath given to

thee: and with a good eye do according to the ability of thy hands." *Ecclesiasticus*, xxxv.

"Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully." *Jeremias*, xlviii.

"He hath done all things well." *St. Mark*, vii.

"For the earth that drinketh in the rain which cometh often upon it, and bringeth forth herbs useful for them by whom it is tilled, receiveth blessings from God. But that which bringeth forth thorns and briars is rejected, and very near to a curse, whose end is to be burnt." *Hebrews*, vi.

"Therefore, while we have time, let us do good to all men." *Galatians*, vi.

SEVENTH THURSDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

MOTIVES OF FEAR.

1st Point. Enter into yourself; examine your life; contemplate your sins, your ingratitude, your infidelities, and withdraw yourself from this state of lukewarmness, into which you are plunged, and propose to yourself these motives of fear and penance.

Consider the infinite majesty of God, which never ought to be offended. When the world, by its offences, had kindled his wrath, He was appeased only by the death of his divine Son, and, notwithstanding, you offend Him so often, so cruelly, and without cause.

2d Point. Consider his rigorous justice, which punishes mortal sin by eternal death, and venial sin by temporal death. Remember how He chastised your sins in the person of his divine Son, in a manner so terrible that his justice was not satisfied until, tortured by the most inconceivable suffering, He yielded up his life on the cross.

3d Point. Consider the hatred of God towards the lukewarm, who weigh on his heart, and whom he is obliged to vomit forth; for the ungrateful, whom He deprives of his graces and allows to die in impenitence; for the haughty, whom He humiliates in time and in eternity; for the impenitent, whom He renders deaf to his word, and to whose hearts He speaks no more; for the presumptuous, who indulge in venial sins until He allows them to fall into mortal.

4th Point. Consider the time which has passed, never to re-

turn; the graces of which you have made such a bad use, and for which you will have to render an account; death, which approaches; judgment, which advances, and eternity, of which you will soon see the beginning, but never the end.

Oh death! oh judgment! oh eternity! my bones shake with fear when I think of them. Oh my God, the thunders of thy justice reverberate through my soul. I acknowledge my guilt before Thee and determine to do penance. Do it at once, and begin a new life.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"And fear not those that kill the body, and cannot kill the soul; but rather fear him that can destroy both soul and body." *St. Matt.* x.

"If then I be a Father, where is my honor? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts." *Malachias*, i.

"Blessed is the man, to whom it is given to have the fear of the Lord." *Eccles.* xxv.

"The fear of God is the beginning of his love." *Ibid.*

"They that fear the Lord, will seek after the things that are well-pleasing to Him, and they that love Him, shall be filled with his law." *Eccles.* ii.

"Work out your salvation with fear and trembling." *Philippians*, ii.

SEVENTH FRIDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE RECOLLECTION NECESSARY TO THE PERFORMANCE OF GOOD ACTIONS.

1st Point. Before entering on a good work examine your motives, calm your heart, fix your intention, do nothing through passion, and avoid sadness, trouble and precipitation. After it is accomplished, pause for a little while, before executing another. Consider from whence you came and whither you are going; if what you have already done is good, and if there is nothing wanting to perfect it; thank God for the good and ask pardon for the bad; offer Him all your succeeding actions; renew your intention, ask his benediction, and place yourself in his hands, to await the movement of his spirit.

These reflections on what you have said and done will bring forth much fruit; they will reveal to the soul all its faults and

imperfections, make it know its frailty and malice, give it a contempt for itself, establish it in humility by giving it a knowledge of its defects, and show it the abyss of its misery. They prepare it for the nightly examen of conscience, and often produce acts of contrition; they will render it vigilant and faithful, and often draw on it new graces; they inspire it with fervor, correct evil as soon as it is done, and prevent it from taking root in the heart.

2D POINT. This entering into ourselves keeps us recollected in the presence of God, a forgetfulness of which is the source of all sin. It is a curb to the will, whose inclinations seek only to abandon themselves to its desires. It regulates the impulses of the heart, which only desires to do what is pleasing to nature; it elevates corrupt nature, which only seeks its own abasement; it steadies the fickle spirit; it keeps us on our guard, and makes us discern between the movements of nature and grace; it procures for the soul supernatural and divine prudence; it discovers to us the approach of our enemies, which are the world, the flesh and the devil.

3D POINT. This continued recollection of spirit, purges the soul of its past sins, and is a preservative against them in future. It causes it to practise the acts of all the virtues; it disposes it to union by the purity of its life; it makes it enter often within itself, and prevents it from wandering astray; it keeps the conscience pure, tranquil, and contented; it prevents it from being surprised by death. This recollection honors God, edifies our neighbor, is a terror to devils, a joy to the angels, and renders man in a manner happy on earth, because he dwells continually in the presence of God.

Is this your practice? is it thus you labor? are you not hasty in your actions? are you not too dilatory in your designs? are you not too often occupied with thoughts of yourself? do you go stumbling along, not knowing whither you go? do you not too often pause to look behind you, instead of pursuing an onward and upward course? how long has it been since you entered into yourself? Is it possible that you do not think of God and work for him? We should fear and shun extremes. Discover your defects, and correct them without delay.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Dearly beloved, if our heart do not reprehend us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things." 1 *John*, iii.

"I know my iniquity, and my sin is always before Thee." *Psalm* l.

"And I meditated in the night with my whole heart; and I was exercised, and I swept my spirit." *Psalm* lxxvi.

"But if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." 1 *Corinthians*, xi.

"I attended and hearkened: no man speaketh what is good; there is none that doeth penance for his sins saying: What have I done?" *Jeremias*, viii.

"I know what I will do." *St. Luke*, xvi.

SEVENTH SATURDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON CONFORMITY TO THE WILL OF GOD.

1st Point. "*Not every one that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.*"

I am in this world only to do the holy will of God, and I deserve to be hurried out again as soon as I cease to do it. I shall never arrive at perfection, and never know either peace or rest, if I do not that which God desires of me. It is necessary that I should obey Him. If I do not belong to the order of his goodness, it follows that I must belong to that of his justice; if I do not submit to his blessed will, I must fall under his powerful will; if I do not desire to yield to the attraction of his love, it is necessary that I should feel the effects of his anger and justice.

2d Point. Oh, what happiness, not to have any other rule of judgment than the judgment of God, no rule of the will but the will of God! I shall partake in a manner of the wisdom, justice, holiness, peace, and happiness of God, if his will in all things is mine, and my will in all things corresponds with his own.

3d Point. Alas! have I been so miserable as to wage war against God? All have opposed my will when I have contended with his; all my inferiors revolted against me when I have refused obedience to my superiors. Can a limb be dislocated without pain? Who can be at rest, or know peace, while they are engaged in a warfare with God?

O my God, my Creator, do not abandon me to my badly regulated passions; do not permit me to offend Thee or stray from thy guidance; overcome and destroy my will lest it should triumph over thine; compel me by thy power if I do not desire to

obey Thee; do thy will with me if I will not do thy will; draw me by force, if I become unwilling to follow Thee.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"He will do the will of them that fear Him; and He will hear their prayer and save them." *Psalm* cxliv.

"As it shall be the will of God in heaven, so be it done." 1 *Machabees*, iii.

"Not what I will, but what Thou wilt." *St. Mark*, xiv.

"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" *Acts*, ix.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE GOSPEL. *St. Luke*, xvi. 1–9.

"At that time Jesus spoke to his disciples this parable: There was a certain rich man who had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said to him: How is it that I hear this of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship: for now thou canst be steward no longer. And the steward said within himself: What shall I do, because my lord taketh away from me the stewardship? To dig, I am not able; to beg I am ashamed. I know what I will do, that when I shall be removed from the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. Therefore, calling together every one of his lord's debtors, he said to the first: How much dost thou owe my lord? But he said: A hundred barrels of oil. And he said to him: Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then he said to another: And how much dost thou owe? who said: A hundred quarters of wheat. He said to him: Take thy bill, and write eighty. And the lord commended the unjust steward, forasmuch as he had done wisely: for the children of this world are wiser in their generation, than the children of light. And I say to you: Make unto you friends of the Mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail, they may receive you into everlasting dwellings."

Meditation.

ON THE GOSPEL.

1ST POINT. We are all the stewards of Jesus Christ our Saviour, who being infinitely rich, made himself poor for the love of us.

It is from Him that we have received every gift of body and soul, of nature and grace. It is that we may make a good use of it, that He has given us knowledge to praise and to glorify Him, to love Him, and induce others by our precept and example to love Him; and to assist our neighbor in his corporal and spiritual necessities, by sharing with him our goods and possessions.

2D POINT. Remember that it is our Lord from whom you have received all that you possess. Examine yourself, and see what use you have made of it up to the present time. You will have to render an account of all that you have received. Much is demanded of him, to whom much is given. How have you employed your understanding, memory, and will, and for whom? What use have you made of the senses of your body, your goods and fortune, your influence, power, and authority, and, above all, of the treasures of grace with which you have been enriched since you came into the world? How much have you profited by so many inspirations, sermons, meditations, so many confessions and communions? *One* good communion would suffice to make a saint. How many have you made? Are you any better? Have you corrected *one defect*? Have you acquired one virtue? What account will you render? Oh Lord, enter not into judgment with thy poor servant, for none can justify him if Thou dost search him: none save him if Thou dost condemn him.

3D POINT. God calls us at all times and seasons to demand of us an account of our administration of his goods, by the interior reproaches of our conscience; by his voices, which He makes heard in the depths of our soul; by confessors and preachers; by angels and men, who accuse us, and represent to our Lord how we waste his goods. Oh! there are innumerable witnesses who will testify against us. But it is chiefly at the hour of death that we shall hear that terrible voice demanding us to "*Render an account of our stewardship.*" This account must be general, exact, just, and without reserve. Nothing can escape the knowledge of God. It will be necessary to give Him an account of every idle word. Oh, great God! how shall I account for so many impure, false, deceitful, angry, and impious words?*

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

EIGHTH MONDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. "*What shall I do?*" said the steward in the gospel. Alas! are there any who enter into themselves and ask, "*What shall I do?*" What will you do when you are obliged to appear before the tribunal of God? are your accounts ready? have you put your affairs in order? are you in a state to appear before the divine tribunal? for what are you waiting? will there be time to set your affairs in order when you are called to render an account of them? who can command sufficient time, memory, strength, and application at the hour of death to arrange an affair of such importance? are you sure that you will have time, and not be surprised? O what will you do? Do from this moment all the good that lies in your power.

2d Point. "*Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of iniquity!*" Our Lord calls them thus, because riches are generally the fruits of much iniquity and injustice, or because, being the cause of many sins, they render those who possess them proud, arrogant, haughty, disdainful, impious, inhuman, dishonest, sensual, and immodest. But when they are given to the poor, they produce fruits of sanctity which console the giver at the hour of death, and procure for him admission into everlasting habitations.

3d Point. You will want all that you can gain to support you at the hour of death. The world will recede from you. Your best friends will abandon you, or, if they remain by you, cannot assist you; neither can they prepare your account, or answer for you, because every man must answer for himself, and be judged according to his works. Oh, terrible sentence to a soul who has abused the gifts of God: "Depart from thy body, oh unfaithful soul, and render unto me an account of my goods which you have wasted!" There is nothing, then, that can serve us in that awful hour except our good works and the fidelity with which we have acquitted ourselves of our duties, of the exercise of corporal and spiritual charities, the mercy that we have shown, and the evils that we have suffered with patience. Do good, then, suffer evil whenever an opportunity presents itself, and exercise yourself in all patience while you have time.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"The night cometh, when no man can work." *St. John*, ix.

"For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the proper things of the body according as he hath done it, whether it be good or evil." 2 *Corinthians*, v.

"For those that will become rich fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men in destruction and perdition." 1 *Timothy*, vi.

"Charge the rich of this world not to be high-minded, nor to trust in the uncertainty of riches, but in the living God; to do good, to be rich in good works, to give easily, to communicate to others, to lay up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on true life." *Ibid.*

EIGHTH TUESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON SLANDER.

1st Point. A word is soon spoken, but cannot be soon repaired; it passes lightly, but wounds cruelly; it pierces the heart of God, who defends the slandered; it pierces the heart of the person slandered; it will pierce the heart of the accomplice of the slanderer; it will pierce the heart of the author of the slander.

2d Point. The tongue of the slanderer is a venomous viper, which instils its poison into the heart and mind, and poisons while it wounds; it is a two-edged sword, which divides the members of the mystical body of Jesus; a lance which penetrates the heart; a thief who steals the most precious of one's treasures; a murderer who will attack the most pure and noble lives! Can one who does not restore stolen goods, obtain pardon for his sins? Ah, by what means can reputation, once destroyed, be repaired? Can a severe wound be closed without leaving a scar? It is, then, an incurable wound and an evil that is almost without a remedy.

3d Point. Oh my God, behold me, a thief and a murderer! I know that I have injured and destroyed the reputation of many, but I know not whether I have made sufficient reparation for the same. My tongue has, a thousand times, pronounced on me the sentence of death, since by my words I shall be justified or condemned.

Fly from the company of slanderers; Satan is in their mouths

when they speak to you, and in your ears when you listen to them. Repair the injuries you have done to others; remember that often the *truth* which is not charity, proceeds from a charity which is not true.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"The man that, in private, detracted his neighbor, him did I persecute." *Psalm* c.

"Detract not one another, brethren. He that detracteth his brother, or he that judgeth his brother, detracteth the law, and judgeth the law." *St. James*, iv.

"He that hath no guard on his speech shall meet with evils." *Proverbs*, xiii.

"And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity." *St. James*, iii.

"For by thy words shalt thou be justified; and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." *St. Matt.* xii.

EIGHTH WEDNESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE ACCOUNT THAT WE MUST RENDER TO GOD AT THE LAST DAY.

1st Point. There is an eye that beholds all, an ear that hears all, and a hand that writes all. The eye that sees all is itself unseen; the ear that hears all is concealed, and the hand that records all is hidden from our sight. I am seen by one whom I cannot see; I am heard and hear not; I know not and am known. Oh, my God, Thou seest strange and evil things in my heart; Thou hearest wicked and detestable things from my lips; Thou dost record strange and horrible things in the history of my life.

2d Point. Nothing is lost; nothing passes into oblivion; all goes from time to eternity; that which has passed will return; that which we believe to be lost and forgotten will return; that which we have buried in forgetfulness and darkness, will reappear before the eyes of all the world. The sinner will die, but his sin will live forever; it will last during eternity. That which passes in time, passes not with time. A sin is soon committed, and if it is not effaced by penance an eternity cannot blot it out.

3d Point. All shall be examined without exception; all shall be judged without distinction of persons; all the wicked shall be condemned without grace, and be punished without remission. Unhappy I, when God shall judge me, and reveal all my crimes!

Unhappy I, when the book of my conscience is opened, and the abominable history of my life is exposed to every eye! Unhappy I, when my Judge shall call me before his tribunal, and say to an assembled world: "Behold the man and his works! Behold the good I have done him, and the evil he has done me!*

EIGHTH THURSDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE THINGS OF WHICH IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO RENDER AN ACCOUNT.

1st Point. We shall be obliged to render an account of the good we have done, the good we have received, of the good we have omitted, and of the good we have refused to do. Of the evil we have committed; of the evil we have caused others to do; of the evil we have approved of; of the evil we have not prevented; of the evil in which we have been an accomplice; of which we have been the cause, either by counsel, command, consent, insinuation, approbation, negligence, aid, example, or scandal. You will be as often damned as you shall have caused the damnation of souls. You will be as often crowned in heaven as you shall have saved souls.

2d Point. "*Come, all ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*" Oh, words full of joy and consolation! "*Depart from me, ye accursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*" Oh, words full of terror and despair! Where shall I hide when I am called? What will become of me when I am questioned? What will become of me when I shall be judged? Where shall I fly for refuge when I am condemned? What shall I do when my sentence is carried into effect, and my soul is plunged into hell? What shall I wish to have done when I am tormented among the damned forever?

3d Point. Oh, formidable day! Oh, terrible judgment! My God, what shall be my end? shall I be saved? shall I be damned? shall I be of the number of the predestined? shall I be of the number of the lost? All is uncertain. If I am one of the sheep of Jesus Christ, I shall be saved; if not, I shall be numbered with the goats, and lost. Your sentence is written on your tongue; you shall be justified or condemned by your words. Accuse

* Words of Scripture at the end of following Meditation.

yourself during life, and after death you shall be excused; condemn yourself, and God will defend and deliver you; forgive, and you shall be forgiven; show mercy to others, and it shall be shown to you.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ." *Romans*, xiv.

"For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil." 2 *Corinthians*, v.

"All mercy shall make place for every man, according to the merit of his works, and according to the wisdom of his sojournment." *Ecclesiasticus*, xvi.

"And if the just man shall scarcely be saved, where will the wicked and the sinner appear?" 1 *Peter*, iv.

EIGHTH FRIDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE RICHES OF GOD.

1st Point. God is sufficient for himself; He has no need of us. God is sufficient for his creatures; they need only Him. God is every thing to all conditions of men; He is light to the blind, health to the sick, consolation to the afflicted, strength to the weak, salvation to sinners, life to the dead, and peace to the living.

Oh sweet words: "*My God and my all!*" Oh they are full of hope and joy to a soul to whom God is all, and to which all that is not of God is nothing.

2d Point. Oh, my God and my all! I seek, think, and reason, and find all in these words: "*My God and my all!*" All that I read or hear occupies my mind, but does not fill my heart; I find everywhere emptiness and poverty. It is only in Thee, my God, that I find the fulness of all that I desire. These few words are sweeter than honey to my lip, and a source of living water to my heart. It is this water that quenches my thirst, and extinguishes the fires of concupiscence that would otherwise consume me.

Having Thee, what is there worth sighing after? What can content or satisfy me, if not thyself? My soul, what is sufficient for you if God is not? What can you seek for in creatures that

you do not find in God? and what have you found in God that you can expect to find in creatures? Oh, my God and my all! Thou shalt be my all in all, and all creatures shall be to me, without Thee, as nothing.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"I have said to the Lord, Thou art my God, for Thou hast no need of my goods." *Psalm* xv.

"I will show thee all good." *Exodus*, xxxiii.

"Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with mercy and compassion; who satisfieth thy desire with good things." *Psalm* cii.

"For what have I in heaven? and besides Thee what do I desire on earth? For Thee my flesh and my heart hath fainted away; Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever." *Psalm* lxxii.

EIGHTH SATURDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON ALMS.

"*Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity.*"

1st Point. The rich depend on the poor, and the poor on the rich. The rich have more need of the poor than the poor have of the rich. The rich give corporal aid to the poor, and the poor give spiritual aid to the rich. The poor depend on the rich for time, the rich depend on the poor for eternity. Without the rich the poor would perish corporally; without the poor the rich would die spiritually. The rich are the judges of the poor on earth, the poor will be the judges of the rich in heaven. Why, then, do you despise the poor? Why treat them rudely? Why not endeavor to gain their favor? Why not soothe their miseries?

2d Point. Graces and chastisements are in the hands of the poor. When they implore mercy for those who assist them, God hears and grants their prayer; when they invoke his justice on those who turn a deaf ear to their necessities, He hears and punishes. A rich man is in danger of his salvation, if he is without the prayers and blessings of the poor. The rich man who has not the poor for his advocate, shall not find grace with his Almighty Judge. He for whom the poor pleads will be saved.

3D POINT. Do good, then, to the poor, since they are men like yourself, and you are poor like them. Their misery is only corporal, yours is spiritual; you have more need of them than they have of you. Who is this who asks alms of you? It is Jesus, your friend, your God, your Father, and your King; it is He who is in need; He who begs you to assist Him. Oh happy are the rich who can give alms to Jesus! Oh unhappy are the rich who refuse alms to Jesus Christ!

4TH POINT. Fear not poverty, as long as you assist the poor. Bread will multiply in your hands, as it did in those of Jesus in the desert, if you are charitable. You will want for nothing, if you see that the poor are provided for. The silver that you give them will not be lost, but be as seed planted in fruitful soil, which will return a hundred-fold to those who sow therein. Will you never trust God? Is your gold insecure in his royal treasury? Is there not enough therein to pay and recompense you? He engages, by a solemn contract, signed with his own blood, to return a hundred-fold that which is given to the poor; He has constituted himself their security, and your debtor; He promises you goods for time and eternity, if you will dispense a portion of your possessions among the poor for his sake. Will you be so ungrateful as to refuse Him? so distrustful as to ask greater security than He offers? so unfeeling as not to be touched hy his misery? so unjust as to retain the goods that He bestowed on you on condition of your giving a portion of them to the needy? Oh unhappy are the rich who refuse alms to Jesus Christ. When death strips them of all, and they are reduced to a state of utter poverty, they will beg alms of Him and will not receive; they will ask for mercy and favor, when they are judged, but in vain.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Redeem then thy sins with alms, and thy iniquities with works of mercy to the poor: perhaps He will forgive thy iniquities." *Daniel*, iv.

"If one of thy brethren, that dwelleth within the gates of thy city in the land which the Lord thy God will give thee, come to poverty; thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor close thy hand, but shalt open it to the poor man: thou shalt lend him that which thou perceiveth he needeth, lest he cry against thee to the Lord, and it become a sin unto thee." *Deuteronomy*, xv.

"Blessed is he that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor: the Lord will deliver him in the evil day." *Psalm* xl.

"Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared

for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat: I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink: I was a stranger, and you took me in; naked, and you clothed me; sick, and you visited me; in prison, and you came to me." *St. Matt.* xxv.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE GOSPEL. *St. Luke*, xix. 41–47.

"At that time, when He drew near Jerusalem, seeing the city, He wept over it, saying: If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace: but now they are hidden from thy eyes. For the days shall come upon thee: and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee: and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone: because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation. And, entering into the temple, He began to cast out them that sold therein and them that bought, saying to them: It is written: My house is the house of prayer. But you have made it a den of thieves. And He was teaching daily in the temple."

Meditation.

ON THE GOSPEL.

1ST POINT. Jesus approached Jerusalem in triumph: "*And when He drew near, seeing the city, He wept over it.*" He foresaw all the evils that threatened it, and were coming on it, and, touched with compassion, He wept. He did not forget its coming sorrows amidst his glorious triumphs, nor was He joyful amidst the solemn pomp thereof. He teaches us, by this example, that which He has taught us by the mouth of his wisdom, not to forget the evil days during the times that are good and joyful; that it is necessary to have always before us thoughts of death and judgment, the vanity of the world, and the inconstancy of creatures. There are tears of compunction, tears of compassion, and tears of devotion. One weeps with his neighbor in sympathy for his miseries. Another is filled with the love of God, and weeps because he desires to see Him and be with Him. Is this the cause of your tears? "*Women, why weep ye?*" Oh, if you thought of Paradise, if you contemplated the flames of hell, if you had before your eyes the evils that you have done, and the wrath with which

you are threatened, you would weep in a different manner from the way that you now do.

2d Point. There is nothing sweeter to an enemy than the gratification of his revenge. The Jews were the mortal enemies of Jesus. He foresaw the chastisements that God his Father would inflict on them, for having persecuted Him unto death; but far from rejoicing thereat, He shed tears, and was much afflicted. Oh, amiable heart of Jesus! oh, heart most tender, charitable, and merciful! how is it that thy creatures can so far forget themselves as to wound and afflict Thee? Take care lest you rejoice at the misfortunes of your neighbor. Be careful never to wish them evil. They harm themselves more than you. They may be your enemies, but they are worthy of compassion, and whatever evil that you wish may befall them, will be visited on yourself.

3d Point. Jerusalem is the figure of a rebellious soul that resists God, rejects his graces, stifles his inspirations, despises his commandments, sighs not for his promises, and mocks at his threats; which thinks not of its past sins with tears of compunction; or of its present sins, to disenthrall itself from them; or of its future sins, to avoid them; of the mercy of God, whose arms are extended towards it; of the justice of God, that threatens it and prepares its chastisements; of the shortness of life; of approaching death, or the judgment towards which it is hastening. Oh, ungrateful soul, if you knew all that you deserve! oh, if you knew how often you have made Jesus weep! How can you console yourself? How can you rejoice while Jesus weeps?*

NINTH MONDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE GOSPEL.

1st Point. The Romans were the enemies who ruined and laid waste the city of Jerusalem; but devils are the enemies who besiege a rebellious soul. It is not your gold, silver, or treasures that they seek, but the eternal ruin of your soul. They pursue it during life, and lay siege to it at death; they surround it on every side, shut out from it every avenue of grace, take it, enslave it, pillage it of all its treasures, and leave not one stone upon another, but desolate it utterly. Alas! you are willing to suffer all imaginable

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

evils in defence of your temporal possessions, and take no pains to defend your own soul, but abandon it to the devil, who makes himself master of it. Oh, if you knew, or could understand the state of a soul that falls into the power of Satan!

2D POINT. The city of Jerusalem fell into ruin and desolation because she knew not "*the time of her visitation.*" There is a time of grace and a time of chastisement, a time of mercy and a time of justice, a time of consolation and a time of affliction. When a person does not profit by the grace of God, abuses his mercy, and does not make a good use of his consolations, he falls into grievous pains and extreme afflictions. The devil visits the soul as well as God, but with this difference, the visits of God produce peace and the fruits thereof, those of the devil contentions and innumerable evils. We must, then, mistrust all that troubles the heart and disquiets the soul. Oh, if you only knew who it is that comes to visit us in holy communion! He comes not to destroy but to save; He comes to give us his peace: refuse it not.

3D POINT. Jesus, having entered the temple, drove out those who profaned it by their negotiations and traffic. This must have been a great profanation of the holy place, since it filled the Lamb of God with wrath, and caused Him to drive thence, with blows, the buyers and sellers, to upset the tables of the money-changers, and throw their gold and silver on the pavement. Your soul is the temple of God: what passes therein? What shameful and abominable traffic! Do you not make the house of God a den of thieves? Oh, if you knew what misfortunes you draw on yourself when you abandon the exercise of prayer, or when you pray with lukewarmness, sloth, or negligence!

Your soul is the house of God, or the abode of the devil. Does it praise God or blaspheme Him? Is it a holy or a profane place? I see therein only brutal passions, shameful occupations, and an avarice whose aims are all mean and sordid. What, idols of vanity and impurity on the altars of this temple! Break these idols, overthrow these altars, drive out these evil traders, and give the gold and silver to the poor, or God will give it to your enemies. Purify your soul, which is the temple of God, and let it no longer be a den of thieves, and a retreat for ambitious and impure thoughts. Oh, if you knew the evils that result from profaning this temple of God!

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, because He hath visited and wrought the redemption of his people." *St. Luke*, i.

"I have spread forth my hands all the day to an unbelieving people, who walk in a way that is not good, after their own thoughts." *Isaias*, lxv.

"Behold, I cast out devils, and do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I am consummated." *St. Luke*, xiii.

"I will visit their iniquities with a rod, and their sins with stripes." *Psalm* lxxxviii.

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent to thee! how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not?" *St. Matt.* xxiii.

NINTH TUESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE DEATH OF THE WICKED, WHICH IS FIGURED BY THE CITY OF JERUSALEM SURROUNDED BY ENEMIES.

1st Point. Death is a great evil; sin is greater; but death and sin united make the greatest of all evils. It is a universal and eternal evil, and an evil without remedy. The most terrible threat that God can utter against a man is, that he shall die in his sins.

Oh, the death of the wicked is horrible beyond description! They are seized with mortal terror when, without expecting it, they find themselves on the uttermost verge of that time which they have so badly employed, ready to enter into a frightful abode, from whence they will return no more forever; when they begin to see that which they have never seen, when they begin to conceive that which they have never conceived, begin to measure an evil which has no measure, and begin to feel an evil which they have never felt.

They leave a place of temporal pleasures, to enter into a place of eternal torture, descend from their earthly paradise to a place of misery, pass from abundance to extreme poverty, and fall from a throne of glory into an abyss of shame. Oh, terrible change! oh, surprising novelty!

2d Point. That which constitutes the desire of the good will be the fear of the wicked. The just desire only to see God; the wicked fear nothing so much as to appear before Him. Oh, the astonishment and dismay of the sinner, when he finds himself before the tribunal of a God whom he has irritated, a Father whom he has outraged, a Friend whom he has betrayed, a King whom he

has abandoned, a Judge whom he has offended, a SAVIOUR whom he has mocked, sold, and crucified!

Then he will behold himself, like a rebellious city, surrounded by devils, who besiege and lay claim to the possession of his soul and body. He will see at his head a Judge, who is about to condemn him; at his feet an abyss, into which he will fall; behind him the world, which has betrayed and abandoned him; before him the goods and treasures that he has loved so much, and of which he will soon be stripped; at his side his good angel and devils; the angel angry, the devils waiting impatiently for their prey; within, an enraged conscience and the sight of innumerable sins which he has committed: and around him the flesh that he has loved, but which he must now abandon.

3D POINT. Oh, what a sweet and consoling spectacle to the dying Christian is the death of Jesus on the cross! But, while it is the hope of Christians, it fills the dying impenitent with despair. They behold all his wounds reopen at their presence, and hear a voice of thunder saying to them: Behold Him whom you have crucified! behold the Saviour you have renounced! behold the wounds I have received for and from you! behold the side which was opened for you, that you might enter into my heart, but you refused! Depart from me, ye accursed: ye can never enter here!

What will be my last end? How shall I die? As I have lived. If I live like the just my death will be like theirs; if I live like the wicked my end will be like unto theirs. Oh my God, let me die the death of the righteous, let my last end be like theirs! I wish to live in the practice of mortification and good works, that I may die like them. I wish to live in grace, to die in grace; to live in peace that I may die in peace.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"The death of the wicked is very evil." *Psalm* xxxiii.

"Burning coals shall fall upon them: Thou wilt cast them down into the fire: in miseries they shall not be able to stand." *Psalm* cxxxix.

"Unless you do penance you shall all likewise perish." *St. Luke*, xiii.

"Why shall I fear in the evil day? The iniquity of my heel shall encompass me." *Psalm* xlviii.

"And they shall leave their riches to strangers: and their sepulchres shall be their houses forever." *Ibid.*

"And the rich man also died: and he was buried in hell." *St. Luke*, xvi.

NINTH WEDNESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE DEATH OF THE JUST.

1st Point. Death is sweet to those to whom life is bitter When one finds no pleasure in life he finds it in death; he leaves without pain that which he possessed without pleasure; he removes with joy from a house in which he found no enjoyment. Separation is agreeable to those who do not love each other; if you do not love your body it will give you no trouble to leave it. What reason have you to love it? What happiness can you find on earth, where you are always in danger of losing your soul? That which you have loved in this life will cause you bitter grief when you come to die. That which afflicted you during life will, in death, be your consolation.

2d Point. What can grieve a soul which has nothing to attach it to the world? Love is strong like death; love separates the soul from the body, and from all the things of sense; it does beforehand all that death can do. What can attach a soul that holds no more to the body? Oh the view of its good works fills it with consolation at the hour of death; the treasure of its merits cannot be wrested from it; it is a precious inheritance, which no power can take away.

3d Point. I can see nothing better in life than a beautiful gate by which to go out of it. Of all the good that man can desire the greatest is to die well; death is not frightful to him who has lived well, it is rather the consummation of his desires, because it is the end of his combats, the crown of his merits, the entrance into the glory which awaits him, and the passage to a better life. Fear not, God will not abandon in death those who have been his faithful servants in life. He fortifies them with his grace; He lets them lean on his bosom; He dispels their fears, and orders his angels to console, defend and receive their souls, and bear them to heaven.

Oh *the death of his saints is precious in the sight of the Lord.* The sacrifice is glorious; the victim is acceptable. My God, can I hope for a good death if I lead a wicked life? It is true that I have lost my innocence, but I can recover it by penance. Do penance, then, now while you have time and opportunity, for an hour draws near when you will be deprived of both. Live like the righteous, that your death may be like theirs.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." *Apocalypse*, xiv.

"With him that feareth the Lord, it shall go well in the latter end, and in the day of his death he shall be blessed." *Eccles.* i.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." *Psalm* cxv.

"But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption is at hand." *St. Luke*, xxi.

"He shall cast death down headlong for ever: and the Lord God shall wipe away tears from every eye." *Isaias*, xxv.

"And the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and shall come into Sion with praise; and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away." *Isaias*, xxxv.

NINTH THURSDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE CHASTISEMENT OF SINNERS.

1st Point. Our hearts are the temples of God; they are consecrated by baptism, purified by the sacrament of penance, sanctified by the holy eucharist, and by the presence of the Holy Ghost, who makes them his dwelling, and who there receives our homage, our adoration, our praise, our offerings, and our prayers. This is the reason why, as our material temples are holy, our hearts should be so likewise. As it is sacrilege to profane them, is it not also sacrilege to profane the heart? Oh, my brethren, says St. Paul, remember that you are the temples of the Holy Ghost. Do nothing, therefore, which could offend the pure eyes of God, who dwells in you.

2d Point. The temple of Jerusalem was profaned by the proud and arrogant, who are represented by the buyers and sellers; by the avaricious, who exercised therein unjust traffic and usury, and by the impure, who are represented by beeves and other cattle that were brought hither for sale. Thus the heart of man is profaned by avaricious and ambitious desires, badly regulated impulses, concupiscence, and brutal passions.

Behold what kindled the anger of our Lord! behold the cause that stirred his zeal to action! behold why He chastiseth those who dishonored his temple!

Enter into yourself, examine your heart and see that there is nothing within to offend the majesty and sanctity of God; He is a jealous God, and will not suffer idolatries in his temple. What are those false divinities to whom you sacrifice your desires? What means this shameful traffic? this infamous commerce? these impurities? this lasciviousness? these ambitious thoughts? this hatred and revenge? Many are the chastisements prepared for the wicked. If the Son of God made a scourge, He found the cords on earth; if God chastises us, it is because we place the rod in his hands, and our sins force Him to punish us.

There are three cords, that is, three chastisements wherewith He punishes the profaners of his temple. He covers them with disgrace to punish their pride; He casts their gold and silver to the earth, and overthrows the tables of those who think of nothing but the gratification of an avaricious passion; He subjects them to all the penalties of their pride, avarice, and voluptuousness. The chastisements that our Lord inflicted on the profaners of his material temple are only figures of those which He brings on the abusers of his spiritual.

Examine your conscience, visit your heart and discover if it has not some inordinate attachment, or if it does not hold some criminal intercourse with creatures. You complain of the ignominies with which you are visited; you are troubled about your gains, and do not know what will become of the treasures which you have amassed; you are consumed with anger, inquietude and malice. Do you know the cause? It is because there is an idol in your heart that you adore; that there is an altar to avarice therein, where you immolate all your desires; and one of voluptuousness, where you offer the sacrifice of body and soul. There are attachments, inclinations, affections, and preferences, which you worship instead of God, forgetting that He is a jealous God, who will have no other gods before Him, and that He will punish in his wrath all who turn aside to worship idols. Behold the cause of your misfortunes!

He drove them out of the temple with their unholy traffic, their goods, and their treasures of gold and silver. What! do you dare make my Father's house a den of thieves? Do you carry on in your heart, which is my temple, these infamous negotiations? do you adore these creatures of gold and silver, these creatures of lust and sin, and profane my house thereby? Oh, I will reign

over thee by love or power; I will make thee feel the effects of my justice, if you do not feel the effects of my goodness.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Many are the scourges of the sinner." *Psalm* xxxi.

"And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it into the temple of Dagon, and set it by Dagon." 1 *Kings*, v.

"Behold I will bring an affliction on this place. Because they have forsaken me, and profaned this place, and have sacrificed therein to strange gods." *Jeremias*, xix.

"What is the meaning that my beloved hath wrought much wickedness in my house?" *Jeremias*, xi.

"Behold I will bring evils upon them, which they shall not be able to escape: and they shall cry to me, and I will not hearken to them." *Ibid.*

"O God, the heathens are come into thy inheritance, they have defiled thy holy temple. Pour out thy wrath upon the nations that have not known Thee; and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name." *Psalm* lxxviii.

NINTH FRIDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON AN ABUSE OF THE GRACES AND VISITATIONS OF OUR LORD.

1st Point. Jerusalem was desolated and abandoned to the power of her enemies, because her people would not profit by the time of the visitation of Jesus. God visits us by his inspirations, by his interior touches, by his blessings, by his chastisements, and by the counsel He gives us through the preachers of his word, and by confessors. When you stifle the voice of Jesus, you outrage his Spirit; you imitate Herod, who put to death John the Baptist, through whom He spoke; you imitate Saul, who killed the priests who were the organs of his divinity; and you imitate the Jews who did not profit by his visitation, and were consequently reproved and chastised.

2d Point. When you resist the inspirations of God, you sin knowingly through obstinacy, and with malice; you bury the talent that God has given you, you abuse his most sacred gifts, you trample, says St. Paul, Jesus Christ under foot, profane his blood, and afflict and irritate his Spirit.

3D POINT. When you resist the inspirations of God you hold truth captive, you break up the order of grace which was prepared for you, you put yourself in danger of being placed under the same condemnation as the city of Jerusalem, you draw on yourself the vengeance of God, and there is great reason to fear that you will die in your sins.

NINTH SATURDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE TROUBLES THAT FOLLOW THOSE WHO ABUSE THE GIFTS OF GOD.

1ST POINT. God is silent after having spoken; He hides his face and reveals himself no more after being seen; He goes away after having called in vain; He abandons the soul after having knocked repeatedly at the door of its heart; He at last despises those who despise Him; He scourges with bitter chastisements after having pardoned again and again; He demands much from those who have received much; He punishes with severity those who have received and abused his graces.

Are you not one of those hard and rebellious spirits? are you not the disciple of Herod or Saul? How often has He not spoken to you, called you, waited for you, sought you, pursued you, knocked at the door of your heart and conjured you to open it to Him, to abandon sin, and correct the vices to which you are most subject, to reconcile yourself with your enemies, to bridle your tongue, to frequent the sacraments, and to be more faithful in acquitting yourself of your duties, moral and religious.

How often have you not held truth captive in your mind, and not given it liberty to descend into your heart, that it might pass from your heart to your hands, to strengthen them in the performance of good works?

2D POINT. Oh rebellious soul! the justice of God is about visiting you, and the talents that you have not profited by will be taken from you, and given to him who has made a good use of his, and you will be cast out forever from the kingdom of love and peace, which you have neither striven nor desired to enter. Ungrateful and hardened heart! it is finished. God will not speak again; his word will no longer touch you, the Holy Ghost will no more visit you with his inspirations, Jesus will no longer invite and wait on you, your good angel will cease to reprove you,

your conscience will be silent, remedies can no more profit you, God will never chide you again in love; He will abandon you to the fury of your passions, and the graces that you have abused shall never return.

3d Point. Oh my God, I know that I am not yet abandoned by Thee, because I still hear thy voice threatening and admonishing me! Oh, I no longer desire to make Thee wait, as I have presumed these many years to do! I will no longer resist thy graces or render myself rebellious to thy inspirations; I have long held truth captive, but I will give it liberty without delay, that I may prove the sincerity of my intentions to obey Thee.

O Jerusalem, "*if thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are for thy peace: but now they are hidden from thy eyes.*" Oh soul, know the day of thy visitation; reject not the grace and peace which yet await thee! Perhaps it is the last time that God will visit you, and the last time that He will speak. Profit by this occasion, which perhaps may never return; receive Him into your heart; give Him what He asks, which is to reign therein; and accept the peace He offers you, which surpasseth all human thought. Oh, abuse not his gifts lest you feel the inexorable rigor of his vengeance.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"And thou that despisest, shalt not thyself also be despised?" *Isaias*, xxxiii.

"Because I called, and you refused; I stretched out my hand, and there was none that regarded. You have despised all my counsel, and have neglected my reprehensions. I also will laugh in your destruction, and will mock when that shall come to you which you feared." *Proverbs*, i.

"I go and you shall seek me, and you shall die in your sin." *St. John*, viii.

"Extinguish not the Spirit." 1 *Thessalonians*, v.

"To-day, if you shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts." *Psalm* xciv.

"Therefore I say to you, that the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." *St. Matt.* xxi.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE GOSPEL. *St. Luke*, xviii. 9–14.

"At that time, Jesus spake this parable to some who trusted in themselves as just, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one was a Pharisee and the other a publican. The Pharisee, standing, prayed thus with himself: O God, I give Thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, as is also this publican. I fast twice in the week: I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes towards heaven, but struck his breast, saying: O God, be merciful to me a sinner. I say to you that this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Meditation.

ON THE GOSPEL.

1ST POINT. Behold in the Pharisee the incarnation of a haughty spirit, and in the publican the incarnation of an humble spirit. The just man commences his prayers by an accusation of himself, and the Pharisee by praises of himself. The just man esteems himself the most wicked of men; the Pharisee esteems himself the best and most perfect. The just man beholds only the sins of his life; the Pharisee sees only his own virtues. The just man conceals his good works and makes known his defects; the Pharisee hides his defects and publishes his good works. The just man counts as nothing all the good that he has done, and the Pharisee boasts of and makes much of the little good that he has done. The just man despises no creature; the Pharisee despises all the world, including the publican. The just man labors chiefly for the interior life; he practises those things which lead to holiness, such as faith, humility, patience, and other Christian virtues; the actions of the Pharisee are all exterior, and to be seen of men. Finally, the just man believes that all is wanting in him, and prays to God incessantly to assist him in his spiritual necessities; on the contrary, the Pharisee imagines himself perfect, and does not acknowledge the slightest dependence on God, by asking the least favor of Him, but thanks Him with an affected gratitude that "*he is not like the rest of men.*"

2D POINT. Unhappy are we when we have the vices without the virtues of the Pharisee. Do you fast twice a week as he does? do you pay tithes of all that you possess? do you give great alms to the poor? do you, like him, pray much? do you encompass sea and land to make a proselyte and to enlighten men with the light of faith? Even should you have done all this, you will not be saved if, saith our Lord, your justice does not exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees. Why? Because all their works are done through vanity. Alas! what will become of you, who have all their pride without their good works! Learn of the publican a lesson of humility.

The publican remained near the door of the temple, esteeming himself unworthy to approach the sanctuary. He felt such confusion on account of his sins, that he dared not lift his eyes towards heaven; he struck his breast through a feeling of deep and sincere compunction, confessing himself a sinner, and only worthy of a place among sinners. His prayer was short because his confidence was great and his grief profound.

3D POINT. The judgments of God are different from those of men. Who would not have believed that the Pharisee was in friendship with God, and that the publican under his hatred and displeasure? Notwithstanding which, the Son of God declared that the publican "*went down to the house justified rather than the other*," because one was humble and the other proud, for humility destroys all vices, and pride destroys all virtues.

Are you humble? You have cause to be; you are only nothingness before God; you are only a sinner and the chief of sinners; you are an ungrateful and rebellious sinner; you have all your life abused the graces of God, and have merited the hell of the ungrateful, which is the most profound abyss in the regions of woe. Why do you elevate yourself, creature of dust and ashes? What good have you ever done? What evil have you left undone? How many graces have you not received from God? How have you not abused them? "*Whoever exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*"

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Thou sayest: I am rich, and am made wealthy, and have need of nothing: and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." *Apocalypse*, iii.

"But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but he whom God commendeth." 2 *Corinthians*, x.

"If any man think himself to be something, whereas he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." *Galatians*, vi.

"The just is first accuser of himself." *Proverbs*, xviii.

"Where pride is, there also shall be reproach: but where humility is, there also is wisdom." *Proverbs*, xi.

"Humiliation followeth the proud; and glory shall uphold the humble of spirit." *Proverbs*, xxix.

TENTH MONDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON PRESUMPTION.

1st Point. What are you that you presume on yourself? what have you been? what are you now? what will you be in future?"

For the past you only know that you have sinned, but you do not know that your sins are forgiven you. You know that you have offended God, but do not know that you have appeased Him. You know that you have lost his grace, but you do not know that you have recovered it. You say that you have confessed, but was your confession good? was it entire? was it accompanied by compunction? was it supernatural? was it sincere? Did you confess all your sins? Was it done with all your heart, and as if it were the last you would ever make? Have you changed your ways and life? Was your sorrow true and sincere? I doubt much the sincerity of a grief so transitory, that it dies almost as soon as it is conceived. You say that you do not feel guilty of any sin, but saying so does not justify you. It is not proper to trouble or disturb yourself, but it is still less so to presume, knowing that you have sinned, but not being assured that your sins are forgiven you.

2d Point. Who and what are you at present? Are you in the grace of God? Have you nothing on your conscience to cause you pain? The heart of man is deep and impenetrable. The spirit of the devil is deceptive; he transfigures himself into an angel of light and deceives the most enlightened. The vices imitate the virtues; the passions blind the heart. A man easily persuades himself that what he loves is good; for no man can be at enmity with himself; he readily and plausibly defends that which he inordinately loves; he makes pass for venial that which too often is mortal. What good can you do, you who are

not sure that you have ever done a good action? Who can judge or know your intention? If your intention is bad, it is impossible for the act to be good. Many are deluded by the enemy of souls, who disguises evil under the appearance of good. The human heart is deceitful. There is nothing that God does not sound, does not know, and the designs of which He does not discern and understand.

3D POINT. What will be your future? Are you sure of persevering in the grace of God? Does your will correspond with the inspirations of good that visit you? How often has it not betrayed you? How many times deceived you? Your will is insufficient for your perseverance. It is necessary that God should accompany you, assist, follow and sustain you by his grace. Can you be sure of the will of God? He desires certainly, but not absolutely, to save you. He demands your co-operation; your will is powerless separated from the will of God, and the will of God is of no avail for your salvation without the co-operation of yours. Are not special and extraordinary graces necessary to save a presumptuous soul? Presumption forfeits all claim to the merit of extraordinary favors.*

TENTH TUESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

OTHER MOTIVES OF FEAR.

1ST POINT. Salvation often depends on a little thing. A venial sin cannot damn a man, but that and trifling infidelities often lead to results which bring on him the condemnation of the reprobate. While we are on earth heaven or hell are open to our choice. I find no safety in the world, except in obedience and humility. Angels have fallen from heaven into the eternal abyss of woe; pillars of the church have been consumed or overthrown; Solomon fell into guilt; Judas despaired; Tertullian and Origen strayed from the faith. Who will not be afraid? The fall of great men, eminent in their day for holiness of life, ought to make those who are less, tremble. The ruin of the proud, the hurling down of the mighty, ought to hold us in fear and humility.

2D POINT. Oh my God, my hope, do not abandon me to the spirit of pride! Take from me, oh Father of mercy, all the goods

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

that I possess, spiritual and temporal, so Thou dost leave with me or give me the virtue of humility. Take from me thy gifts, their loss will not afflict me, if I have humility. If I regard only myself, oh my God, I find every thing to fear; but if I consider Thee I see all to hope. I can deceive myself, but Thou canst never deceive me; Thou hast always desired my good, while I have always desired evil; Thou art all powerful, I am all weakness; Thou knowest what is good, and I am ignorant thereof. I abandon myself, then, to thy care; I place in thy hands the care of my salvation; it is safer with Thee than with me. Ah, I shall find true repose, if I depend solely on Thee; all that I fear is myself. I will, then, always distrust myself, and place my whole confidence in Thee my God and my Saviour.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"The heart is perverse above all things, and unsearchable, who can know it? I *am* the Lord who search the heart, and prove the reins." *Jeremias*, xvii.

"For I am not conscious to myself of any thing: yet in this am I not justified." 1 *Corinthians*, iv.

"Thou that standest by faith; be not high minded, but fear." *Romans*, xi.

"Be you humbled, therefore, under the mighty hand of God; that He may exalt you in the time of visitation: casting all your solicitude upon Him; for He hath care of you." 1 *Peter*, v.

TENTH WEDNESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON OUR OWN NOTHINGNESS.

1st Point. To be, is to come from God; not to be, is to return to Him. Until a soul finds its nothingness, it cannot find God. He is hidden under the veil of creatures, and it is only when men have penetrated and looked beyond that material veil that they will see Him, so to speak, in plain view.

To know all, it is necessary to know nothing; to taste all, to taste nothing; to have all, to have nothing. To become all, it is necessary to be nothing.

2d Point. Oh my God! my King! Thou art my all, and I am nothing; Thou art my science, for I know nothing; Thou art my

strength, for I, of myself, can do nothing; Thou art my sanctity, for I am only sin and malice. Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth. My tongue is without words before Thee, but Thou understandest all the language of my heart when it speaks to Thee.

Happy is the soul, that, in the silence of all human reason and vain imaginations, listens to God. Keep silence, carnal and human thoughts, let all the earth be silent in the presence of the Lord.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"I am brought to nothing: as a wind Thou hast taken away my desire: and my prosperity hath passed away like a cloud." *Job*, xxx.

"My substance is as nothing before Thee." *Psalm* xxxviii.

"The watchmen, who keep the city, found me: Have you seen Him whom my soul loveth? When I had a little passed by them, I found Him whom my soul loveth." *Cant.* iii.

"Let all flesh be silent at the presence of the Lord." *Zacharias*, ii.

TENTH THURSDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON PRAYER.

1st Point. Two men went up to the temple to pray. One prayed aright, and went out justified; the other prayed wrong, and was reproved. Learn to pray, and to pray well.

The poor offer petitions to the rich, but there are those of both classes, and full of miseries, who have no recourse to God in prayer, or if they do, it is but seldom, or coldly, or with indifference. Why is this? It is because we are ignorant of our miseries, or do not love Him; it is because we do not know the virtue of prayer; it is because we are proud, and do not wish to humble ourselves before Him; it is because we distrust his wisdom, his power, or his goodness; it is because we are in a sort of lethargy, which prevents our feeling a sense of our miseries; it is because we fear true virtue more than we love it. It is, finally, because we have not faith, hope, charity; no humility, patience, devotion, or zeal for our salvation. These are the reasons why we do not ask the favor and grace of God.

2d Point. There is a wide difference between God and man. Man is poor, God is infinitely rich; man is ignorant of his miseries, God knows all our wants; man is unfeeling, hard, and piti-

less, God is infinitely tender and liberal. Men are not pleased when we ask favors of them, but God is best pleased when we pray most to Him. Prayer is a sacrifice of praise, and therefore it is infinitely agreeable to God. Those who pray, produce in themselves acts of faith, hope, charity, humility, patience, perseverance, resignation, conformity, fervor, devotion, and obedience, which are the sacrifices of prayer.

3D POINT. Oh my God, Thou dost love the humble poor, but the proud are an abomination to Thee. I am not, then, astonished, if I do not obtain any thing from thy goodness. I know not my misery; I do not desire to know it; I do not wish to humble myself before Thee; I do not condescend to invoke thy assistance. Even if I do pray, it is in a cold, indifferent, condescending, vexed, and impatient manner. My prayer is not a perfume of virtues, which goes like a sweet odor into paradise, but a black vapor which rises up only to form angry clouds. It is not an exercise of piety, but a scandalous contempt which kindles the fire of thy anger, and merits nothing but chastisements.

Oh Lord, have mercy on me, and reject not my prayer, for on this my salvation depends. I will henceforth pray to Thee incessantly; knowing my misery, I will appeal to thy infinite mercy; I will pray with humility, knowing thy grandeur; I will pray with confidence, knowing thy liberality; I will pray with submission, knowing that Thou wilt grant me whatsoever I ask of Thee, or even something better than I know how to ask for.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Amen, amen, I say to you: If you ask the Father any thing in my name, He will give it you." *St. John*, xvi.

"For we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit himself asketh for us, with unspeakable groanings." *Romans*, viii.

"Oh, woman, great is thy faith; be it done unto thee as thou wilt." *St. Matt.* xv.

"Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." *St. Luke*, xi.

"If you, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from heaven give the good Spirit to them that ask Him?" *Ibid.*

TENTH FRIDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE DEFECTS OF PRAYER.

1st Point. Why is it that I obtain nothing from God? It is because you ask for those things which are unnecessary or improper for you; because you pray when you are not in a fit state to be heard by Him; and because you pray without attention, respect, devotion, humility, confidence, or perseverance.

2d Point. From whence come these distractions? They come from the devil, whose object it is to disgust us with prayer; they proceed from our imagination, which is light and fickle; they come from our spirit, which occupies itself with vain and useless things during the day; they come from our heart, which is attached to creatures, and goes incessantly after its treasures, to seek and abide with them, and find its chief delight in the intercourse it holds with them: it takes no pleasure in God, finds no happiness in Him, and flies from all communion with Him, because it is a stranger and alien to Him through its want of love. They come from the body, which burdens and weakens the soul; they arise from the small concern we feel for our salvation; they proceed from our own baseness, love of ease, and infidelity.

3d Point. Why am I without consolation? Because you are without afflictions, and desire it with too much passion and impatience. It is because you judge yourself worthy of it, that you murmur when you receive it not; it is because you seek it too much in creatures; it is because God desires to break you of your pride, and hold you in humility; it is to make you feel your weakness, and inspire you with compassion for yourself, to excite your desire, to punish your omissions, to spur your sloth, to try your patience, to increase your merit, to detach you from your sensual existence and make you commence a spiritual life, to oblige you to practise faith, to strengthen your hope, to purify your charity, and prove your fidelity and love.*

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

TENTH SATURDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. Why has God left me in darkness? To make your life more spiritual, and cause you to esteem more highly the graces you have already received; to force you, as it were, to desire them; to make you careful to preserve them, and quick to recover them; to oblige you to feel the necessity thereof; to moderate your fervor, and strengthen your hope; to preserve the health of your soul; to make you merit the graces that God has prepared for you, and to prepare your heart for their reception.

2d Point. Oh, Jesus my Lord! I was blind and deluded when I abandoned prayer in this state of sterility and dryness. Alas! when I thought Thou wert angry with me, it was then Thou wast showing me the most love, and when I thought Thou wert far from me Thou wert most near. Oh, I shall henceforth be more faithful in prayer. In whatever state thy divine wisdom may place me, I will discharge this important duty with fidelity. I will regard my misery with humility, await thy visitation with patience, not ceasing to pray; suffer my privations in peace and tranquillity of spirit, and hold myself honored to wait in thy presence. Is it not paradise to be with Thee.

3d Point. I will then content myself with Thee only. I ardently desire to serve Thee only. I will listen no more to the murmurs and complaints of nature, but, confirmed in faith, I will place all my happiness in pleasing Thee, and doing thy holy will.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Pray without ceasing. In all things give thanks." 1 *Thessalonians*, v.

"God is a spirit, and they that adore Him must adore Him in spirit and in truth." *St. John*, iv.

"You ask, and receive not; because you ask amiss." *St. James*, iv.

"The just cried; and the Lord heard them, and delivered them out of all their troubles." *Psalm* xxxiii.

"Shall not my soul be subject to God? for from Him is my salvation." *Psalm* lxi.

"He hath had regard to the prayer of the humble: and He hath not despised their petition." *Psalm* ci.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE GOSPEL. *Mark*, vii. 31–37.

"At that time, Jesus, going out of the coasts of Tyre, He came by Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coast of Decapolis. And they bring to Him one deaf and dumb; and they besought him that He would lay his hands upon him. And taking him from the multitude apart, He put his fingers into his ears, and spitting, He touched his tongue; and looking up to heaven, He groaned, and said to him: Ephpheta, that is, Be opened. And immediately his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke right. And He charged them that they should tell no man. But the more He charged them, so much the more a great deal did they publish it. And so much the more did they wonder, saying: He hath done all things well; He hath made both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak."

Meditation.

ON THE GOSPEL.

1ST POINT. To be deaf to the Word of God, to be dumb when it is necessary to confess one's sins, or reprove the wicked, or thank God, or pray to Him, or praise Him, is to be possessed of a devil, and in a state which is so afflicting to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, that it causes Him to groan and weep. Are you not possessed of these wicked dispositions? Are you not deaf to the inspirations of God? How often has He not spoken to you, importuned you, exhorted and threatened you? Are you not too often dumb when it is necessary to speak; when you ought to defend the cause and interests of God; when you ought to confess your sins and declare the truth?

3D POINT. There is a good and bad deafness; a good and bad silence. To close your ears to the vain conversation of the world, to the discourse of slanderers, and to all injurious words, is a good deafness; to close them to the advice and correction of superiors, to the threats and counsel of preachers, and to the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, is a bad deafness. Not to speak, when it is necessary to correct inferiors, is a criminal silence. But there is nothing better than to be dumb when any one offends you, speaks evil of you, or gives utterance to injurious things concerning you. As a general rule, when your heart feels moved, and impelled by its emotions to speak, keep silence. Alas! my

ears are open to the suggestions of the devil, and closed to the inspirations of the Holy Ghost. I keep silence when I ought to speak, and speak when I should be silent. Those who brought the deaf and dumb man to Jesus besought Him to heal him; and, filled with compassion, He healed his infirmities. The world is filled with those who are deaf, dumb, and blind, and they find no one to bring them to our Lord! Oh, if you could know the favor you do Him, and the good and glory you procure for Him, when you persuade some fallen brother to forsake the evil of his ways, and have recourse to a confessor, you would surely be more zealous for souls! If you are without charity for others, have it at least for yourself. Pray some one to take you to Jesus, that your ears may be opened, your tongue loosed, and your infirmities all healed.*

ELEVENTH MONDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME GOSPEL.

1st Point. Jesus took the deaf and dumb man apart from the multitude to cure him, and "*looking up to heaven He groaned.*" Oh, have you not, by your miseries and rebellions, often afflicted the Son of God, and wrung groans from his compassionate heart? Are you worthy of consolation? Do you deserve that He should impart healing and joy unto you?

"*He put his fingers into his ears.*" His fingers represent the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which have often entered into your ears, but have never penetrated your heart. "*He touched his tongue.*" Oh, how often has his sacred body touched your tongue and heart, and notwithstanding, you still remain deaf and dumb! Oh, wicked and perverse heart, which so continually resists the touches of grace, and refuses to love Him, who burns with love for you! Oh, slanderous, impure, and provoking tongue, how is it that you dare touch the adorable flesh of Jesus?

2d Point. Open to me your heart, my sister, my spouse! This is the continual and importunate prayer of Jesus. He said to the ears of the deaf man, "*Be opened,*" and at that mighty voice, they were opened, and he heard like others. Oh, how often has He not said to the ears of your heart, "*Be opened,*" and they have refused to acknowledge his authority, or obey his commands!

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

Blessed are the servants who wait, and open the door to their Master as soon as He knocks. Do you suffer Jesus to wait at the door of your heart? Is He not the Master thereof? What insolence for a servant to keep his Lord waiting! If Jesus does not reign in your heart, the devil does. Oh, how miserable is that soul which prefers lodging the devil to Jesus! What peace or repose can a heart have with whom God remains not, but which is possessed by a spirit so evil, cruel, and wicked as Satan!

3d Point. "*He doeth all things well; He has made the deaf hear, and the dumb speak.*" Unbind your tongue, troubled and despairing soul; sing this beautiful canticle of glory, you who murmur against the Providence of God; say night and day, in prosperity and adversity, "*He doeth all things well.*" Could any thing be more beautiful, or admirable, than the world that He has formed? Any work greater, or more sublime, than the redemption of man? What would become of you, where would you be, if He had not died for you; if He had not left you the divine sacraments; if He had not given you his sacred body and precious blood to drink? What innumerable graces has He not bestowed on you! How innumerable the sins that He has pardoned you! from how many misfortures has He not delivered you! If He has sent you afflictions, it was for your own good. Say, then, "*He doeth all things well.*" All that thou dost do, is good; and whether I am consoled or chastised, I will bless thee, oh Lord, at all times, and thy praise shall be ever on my lips.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"And they that sought evils to me spoke vain things, and studied deceits all the day long; but I, as a deaf man, heard not, and as a dumb man, not opening his mouth. And I became as a man that heareth not, and that hath no reproofs in his mouth." *Psalm* xxxvii.

"He who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his ways, shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins." *St. James*, v.

"Open to me, my sister, my love, my undefiled." *Canticle*, v.

"And you yourselves like to men who wait for their lord, when he shall return from the wedding: that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching." *St. Luke*, xii.

"And God saw all the things that He had made, and they were very good." *Genesis*, i.

"It is the Lord: let Him do what is good in his sight." *Kings*, iii.

ELEVENTH TUESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON SINS OF HABIT, REPRESENTED BY THE DEAF AND DUMB MAN IN THE GOSPEL.

1st Point. It is a great evil to accustom ourselves to evil. A habit of sinning is a fatal chain, which binds the soul and renders it a slave to crime. It blinds the spirit, hardens the heart, stifles the voice of conscience, and gives a death blow to modesty and virtue. The oftener we sin, the less pain we feel in the indulgence thereof. At first we regard the sin by which we are tempted with horror; then with fear; and soon with more assurance; in a little while with complaisance; then we begin to take pleasure in it, and, ere long, to glory in it; after which we sin with contempt and indifference, and excite others to do the same. This last state is the profoundest abyss of iniquity, and the extremest degree of malice.

2d Point. A man who does not feel the miseries of a sickness which is destroying him, is sick unto death. A sinner who grows old and hardened in his sins may be regarded as a diseased man, whose life is almost despaired of. He is unconscious of his malady. If he knows it, he loves it, without the slightest desire to detest it. He glories in it, and derives therefrom all his happiness. If he desires conversion, it is only for a moment, and in appearance, and unattended by the slightest effort. His will is without effect, his desires without execution, and his resolutions without perseverance. His evil inclinations come from nature, and his vices from habit.

3d Point. When an evil habit gains the mastery over a soul, it is almost impossible to overcome it. It is like a torrent that sweeps away all that resists it; it is a tyrannical law, which domineers over his will; it is a passion more exacting and cruel than concupiscence; it is a second nature, more corrupt than the first. Grace attacks in vain the heart that sins through habit. Its most vehement blows fall disregarded, and are without effect. It is insensible to the touches of divine love, impenetrable to its arrows, and impervious to its light. It would be less difficult to make an Ethiopian white than to convert an inveterate sinner.

It would be easier to tear up a tree from the earth than tear from the heart a deeply rooted vice.

What is your state? Do you sin through ignorance? Do you sin through passion? Do you sin through weakness? Do you sin without remorse of conscience? Do you sin through habit? Do you sin without grief? Do you take delight in sinning? Do you sin with contempt? Do you blush for your sins, or commit them with boldness and assurance? Do you glory in your sinful acts? Do you never tremble after having sinned?

Oh, slave of the devil! oh, miserable one, whom habit has rendered worse than nature, you are hardenend, you are insensible! Alas! if you felt the evil that is destroying you, there would be some hope of your final restoration; but as you are callous and insensible to your miseries, you are without remedy, and must die.

But consider; do not despair; you are not yet lost. You are not abandoned by God, since you desire to be saved. God does all things well, and nothing in vain; it is He who inspires you with this salutary feeling. He expresses by it his desire to save, and his will to deliver you, if you will, without delay, co-operate with Him in his designs for your salvation.*

ELEVENTH WEDNESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. It is necessary to use great violence to break up these sinful and inveterate habits. Without effort you cannot advance. Resist small temptations, and you will get the victory over such as are great. Do with all your heart those things that are easy, and God will do for you whatever is difficult.

2d Point. Assist your neighbor, and God will assist you. Show him mercy, and God will show it to you; pardon your enemy, and God will pardon you. A kind of miracle is necessary to bring about the conversion of an old transgressor, and to obtain this miracle it is necessary to present him to Jesus in spirit; to pray, weep, and above all, interest others to do the same; for our dear Lord considers as done to himself the charity we show to our

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

fellow beings, and as He is good, liberal, and grateful, He will never allow your efforts to go unrewarded.

3D POINT. It is necessary to confess often, for it is the number and the strength of the blows that are given that brings down the tree; frequent bathing keeps the body clean and pure, and the strength and frequency of humble confession heats, detaches, and purifies the soul.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to obey the lusts thereof." *Romans*, vi.

"If the Ethiopian can change his skin, or the leopard his spots, you also may do well when you have learned evil." *Jeremias*, xiii.

"For my iniquities are gone over my head; and as a heavy burden are become heavy upon me." *Psalm* xxxvii.

"A young man according to his way, even when he is old he will not depart from it." *Proverbs*, xxii.

ELEVENTH THURSDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON CONFORMITY TO THE WILL OF GOD.

1ST POINT. "*He doeth all things well.*" This is what we ought to think and say under all circumstances. To judge as God judges is to partake of his wisdom; to wish only what God desires, is to be a partaker of his holiness; to have no desire contrary to the desires of God, is to be exempt from the power or will to sin, like unto Him. His judgment is the rule of our judgment, his will the rule of our will. It is necessary, then, that we should conform our judgment to the judgments of God, and our will to the holy will of God.

2D POINT. God alone is possessed of the right to do what He pleases and desires; He only is entitled to a will of his own. If I, then, wish to dispose of myself and my affairs, according to my own will, and to do all things just as I desire, I shall, like Lucifer, wish to make myself equal with God; it will be expressive of a wish to withdraw myself from the dominion of God and all dependence on Him.

3D POINT. My soul, do you not desire to serve God by obedience? Do you wish to declare war against Him? have you measured your arms with his? can you contend with the All-powerful?

are you as wise as God? can you teach Him how to govern the world? If you seek and do only your own will, you rob Him of his glory, you wish to exalt yourself to his throne and render yourself independent of Him! Which seems the most reasonable, for God to do your will or you to do his?*

ELEVENTH FRIDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE HAPPINESS OF THOSE WHO CONFORM TO THE WILL OF GOD.

1st Point. My soul, you shall enjoy an unspeakable happiness when you conform to the will of God! You will know a profound and enduring peace, your affairs will all prosper under the divine protection, you will be spared all weariness, vexation, and inquietude. God does the will of those who do his; He takes care of all who trust in Him and rest in his providence; He loves those who love Him; He is satisfied with those who find their satisfaction in Him; He prospers the interests of those who advance his.

2d Point. Is it not a heavenly state to desire all that God does, and wish only for what He desires? Is it not a state of torment when every wish makes war against the designs of God, and every desire is contrary to his will? That soul is kept in great peace which conforms itself in all things to the divine will.

3d Point. My soul, what do you intend to do? You will have to submit to the will of God, through love or power. It is an immovable rock; if you attempt to break it, it will break you. It is a strong torrent, which sweeps away all that oppose themselves to its resistless force, and bears sweetly to the centre of rest those who allow themselves to be carried along on its safe and peaceful current. If you will serve God He will serve you; if you will afflict Him He will afflict you; if you do his will He will do yours.

Oh my God, I confess and know, by my own experience, that there is no pleasure in displeasing Thee; no profit in offending Thee. I have never known peace since I have waged war against Thee! Make me, henceforth, all that Thou wouldst have me. Make me serve Thee, even if I desire not to love Thee. Force

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

me to follow Thee, although my desires oppose thy will; constrain my will until it is conformed to thine.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Good things and evil, life and death, poverty and riches, come from God." *Ecclesiasticus*, xi.

"The Lord hath sought a man according to his own heart, and him hath the Lord commanded to be prince over his people, because thou hast not observed that which the Lord commanded." 1 *Kings*, xiii.

"Whatsoever shall befall the just man, it shall not make him sad." *Proverbs*, xii.

"For whosoever shall do the will of my Father, who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother." *St. Matt.* xii.

"Not as I will, but as Thou wilt." *St. Matt.* xxvi.

ELEVENTH SATURDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Spiritual Canticle

OF A SOUL ABANDONED TO THE WILL OF GOD.

1st Point. I am threatened with death; I am consumed with grief and weakness; I am struck with blindness; I am plunged into horrible darkness; I am beaten by tempests; I am exercised by temptations and continual persecutions; I behold myself at the gates of hell; it seems to me that God has abandoned me!

2d Point. Love is stronger than death; it makes its bed in darkness, and sleeps with Jesus during the fury of the tempest; it would make its heaven in hell, provided it found its well-beloved there; it bears its heaven within itself, because its desires are all satisfied; it possesses all, and possesses nothing; God is its treasure and happiness, its all in all, and the world, and all that it contains or promises, is nothing.

3d Point. Oh God! my love, when shalt thou be all to me? When shall I be all to Thee? Thou sayest: Thou wilt be all to me when I am all to Thee, and I shall be all to Thee when I desire only Thee.

In whatever state you may be, and under whatever circumstances, always sing this beautiful canticle of love: "*God doeth all things well. All that He does is good.*" My happiness is to please Him; his desires are mine, and my will is to obey his. I wish to accomplish all that He desires me to do; I wish to be all

that He would have me, and wish to suffer all that He seeth good for me. With the Blessed Virgin I say, with all my heart: Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to thy word.

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE GOSPEL. *St. Luke*, x. 23–37.

"AT that time, Jesus said to his disciples: Blessed are the eyes that see the things which you see. For I say to you that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them; and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them. And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, tempting Him, and saying: Master, what must I do to possess eternal life? But he said to him: What is written in the Law? How readest thou? He, answering, said: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And He said to him: Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said to Jesus: And who is my neighbor? And Jesus, answering, said: A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, who had stripped him, and having wounded him, went away, leaving him half dead. And it chanced that a certain priest went down the same way: and seeing him, passed by. In like manner, also, a Levite, when he was near the place, and saw him, passed by. But a certain Samaritan, being on his journey, came near him; and seeing him, was moved with compassion. And going up to him, bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine; and setting him upon his own beast, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two pence, and gave to the host, and said: Take care of him; and whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I at my return will repay thee. Which of these three, in thy opinion, was neighbor to him that fell among robbers? But he said: He that showed mercy to him. And Jesus said to him: Go and do thou in like manner."

Meditation.

ON THE GOSPEL.

1ST POINT. "*Blessed are the eyes that see the things which you see.*" More blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed.

Most blessed are those who, under the sacramental veils, receive Jesus, and without seeing Him enjoy his divine presence and conversation; who give Him entrance into their hearts, and wish Him to live and reign there; and whose actions are all governed by the operations of his Spirit. This is the happiness of those who communicate worthily. Oh, my soul! many kings and prophets have desired to behold Him whom you receive into your mouth and heart. What return will you make God for so great a benefit, so unspeakable a blessing? He only desires your consent to abide and rest in your heart, and never to be driven hence. Is not this just?

2D POINT. "*Master, what must I do to possess eternal life?*" The question is, not what must I think, believe, or desire, but *what must I do?* Our salvation does not depend alone in good thoughts and desires; but good works are essential. It is the greatest concern of many to know how they can enrich themselves, increase their fortunes, build up houses, and provide for their children. What must I do, they ask, in order to acquire fame, honor, credit, and reputation? what must I do that I may recover my health and preserve it? But how few ask what they must do to gain heaven and escape hell!

3D POINT. "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself.*" With all your mind, by thinking only of Him; with all your heart, in desiring Him alone; with all your strength, by working only for Him; with all your soul, by living and breathing only for Him. Is it thus that you love Him?

Alas! you think only of the world; love only the world; work only for the world; and live and breathe only for the world. You think only of yourself; love only yourself; work only for yourself; and exist only to gratify yourself in all your will and desires.*

TWELFTH MONDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE LOVE OF GOD.

1ST POINT. Is there any thing more just, more necessary, more honorable, more delightful and easy, than to love God? He is

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

the first and most excellent of all beings. He is Goodness and Beauty by essence, through whom all else is beautiful and good. If I love all that is beautiful, ought I not to love its perfect source and cause? It is He who has given me life, and formed my heart. Ah, who has a right to gather the fruits of a tree, if not he who planted it? I live on his earth, and live only to love Him. If, then, I do not love Him, I deserve death. Who must I obey, if not my Lord and King? He commands me to love Him, under the penalty of eternal death. He promises to reward me with eternal joys in heaven if I love Him. He died on the cross, and gave his life for me, through an excess of love, that I may love Him.

2D POINT. Ah, well, my soul! will you always remain insensible to his powerful allurements? ungrateful for such infinite blessings? rebellious to such important demands? unmoved by such tremendous threats? insensible to such rich and glorious promises? What is the nature of your heart, if it can still hold out and refuse to love a God so great, so perfect, so amiable; a God who has given you being, and who preserves it; a God who has done you infinite good; a God who died for you; a God who desires that you should participate in his own happiness, and be associated with Him in his eternal kingdom? "Ah, Lord!" exclaimed St. Augustine, "who art Thou, and what am I, that Thou shouldst command me to love Thee, and threaten me with such inexpressible miseries if I do not? Is there any greater misery for me than not to love Thee? any thing more glorious and advantageous for me than to love Thee? What difference could my loving, or not loving, make to Thee? If I love Thee, will it increase thy bliss? If I love Thee not, will it make Thee miserable? Oh, Divine Love! Thou desiredst me to love Thee, in order to render me happy in thy love! Oh, blessed is the heart that loves Thee! Oh, unhappy and unblessed is the heart that loves Thee not!"

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"I love them that love me." *Proverbs*, viii.

"If I speak with the tongue of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should give all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." 1 *Corinthians*, xiii.

"God is charity. If we love one another, God abideth in us, and his charity is perfected in us." 1 *John*, iv

"Let us, therefore, love God, because God first hath loved us." 1 *John*, iv.

"Behold, what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be named, and should be the sons of God." 1 *John*, iii.

"I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength: the Lord is my firmament, my refuge, and my deliverer." *Psalm*, xvii.

TWELFTH TUESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON CHARITY.

1st Point. Charity is a treasury of merit which enriches us; a treasury of grace, that sanctifies us; a treasury of holiness, that renders us perfect; a treasury of peace, that renders us happy.

Charity effaces all sins, calms every passion, gives birth to every virtue, alleviates all pain, and renders us like unto God; unites us intimately to Him, transforms us, so to speak, in to Him; makes God all to us, and we all to Him.

2d Point. Charity seeks not herself. She loves, purely to love. Her love is her pleasure; her happiness is her recompense. She is humble, patient, and obliging. She is not haughty, proud, disdainful, or envious; she believes all, hopes for all, suffers all, and pardons all. Judge yourself by these effects, and see if you have one spark of charity.

Oh, charity of my God! why dost Thou command me to love Thee? why dost Thou not repel such a creature from the infinite privileges of Thy love? What does it mean, not to love a God infinitely good; a God who has loved us from all eternity; a God who loves us gratuitously; a God who loves us tenderly; a God who loves us continually; a God who is infinitely beautiful; a God whose perfections are infinite; a God who promises us infinite rewards; a God who desires to render us holy, like unto himself; perfect as He himself is; kings, who shall reign with Him forever; happy in the participation of his bliss, and, in a manner, gods like himself?

3d Point. And notwithstanding all this, I do not love Thee, God of all goodness. I am all on fire with love for creatures, and all coldness towards Thee. I am haughty, impatient, passionate, envious, slanderous, sensual, and avaricious. I fear noth-

ing, hope for nothing, suffer nothing, and pardon nothing. Alas! how, then, shall I be saved since salvation is impossible without charity, of which I have not the least sign.

Oh, my God! I hate myself for having preferred miserable creatures to Thee! Too late have I loved Thee, O beauty ever ancient and ever new! Too long have I offended Thee, O goodness, always amiable, and always despised! I will never cease to praise Thee, to bless and to love Thee, and I implore Thee to deprive me of life when I shall be in danger of the misery of not loving Thee.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Now the end of the commandment is charity, from a pure heart, and a good conscience, and an unfeigned faith." 1 *Timothy*, i.

"For charity covereth a multitude of sins." 1 *Peter*, iv.

"If we love one another, God abideth in us, and his charity is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us." 1 *John*, iv.

"For this is the charity of God, that we keep his commandments." 1 *John*, v.

"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." *St. John*, xiv.

TWELFTH WEDNESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE UNITY OF LOVE.

1st Point. Love proceeds from unity, tends to unity, rests in unity, and is preserved by unity. A heart that is right cannot stray; a pure heart cannot defile itself; a free heart cannot bind itself; a simple heart cannot divide itself. "*Woe to them that are of a double heart*," says an inspired writer, they do not love God nor are they beloved by Him.

2d Point. A man cannot serve two masters. A heart cannot love God and the world; the Creator and the creature. There can be only one soul to a body, one sun to a universe, one king to a dominion, one governor to a state, one shepherd to a flock, one pilot to a boat, one love to a heart, and one God to love.

3d Point. You purpose to give Him a portion of your heart? This is unjust, injurious, and impossible. What, did He create it only in part? Will He save it only in part? Has He given you

only a part of his? And why will you only give Him a small part of yours? Is a creature's heart too much for a God? Has He commanded you to give Him only half of your heart?

Oh, God of my heart! I have not loved Thee up to the present time; I have exalted creatures into divinities. In dividing my charity I have divided my faith; I have lost both when I have not loved Thee.

I will henceforth love Thee, O my God, with all my heart, all my strength, and all my soul. I will never again divide my affections; since Thou art all to me, I will be all to Thee. Behold the will of my heart; all to all, one to one, alone to alone. O my God! Thou hast given me all thy mighty and illimitable heart! can, I therefore, justly refuse Thee mine, which is so little and mean, but which Thou condescendest to desire?

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other; or he will hold to the one and despise the other." *St. Matt.* vi.

"How long do you halt between two sides? If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him." 3 *Kings*, xviii.

"Woe to them that are of a double heart." *Ecclesiasticus*, ii.

"Their heart is divided: now they shall perish." *Osee*, x.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind." *St. Matt.* xxii.

TWELFTH THURSDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOR, PREFIGURED BY THE CHARITY OF THE SAMARITAN.

1st Point. Charity presses you to love your neighbor. Whatever his defects may be, he is, like yourself, a creature of God; formed after his own image, like you; bought with the precious blood of his divine Son, as you have been; is a child of the Church, like you; and is nourished and sanctified by the same sacraments that you are.

2d Point. God commands you to love your neighbor as yourself; Jesus commands and beseeches you to do so. He considers as done to himself all the good and all the evil that is done to one of his creatures; He has substituted him in his own place, to re-

ceive your alms and the gratitude you owe himself. He has transferred to him all the right that He has over your heart, and desires you to pay to your neighbor all that you owe himself.

3d Point. If I do not love my neighbor, I am not a disciple of Jesus Christ. I am not a Christian if I do not assist him; God will despise me if I despise him; hate me if I hate him; afflict me if I afflict him. On the contrary, He will excuse me if I excuse my neighbor; He will support me if I support him; He will pardon me if I pardon him; He will treat me as I treat him. By the charity I have rendered him, I must be judged.

What will be your judgment? what will become of you if God treats you as you have treated others? Do you not desire God to love you, do you good, and assist you in your necessities? support you in your weakness excuse you, console, and pardon you? Go and do likewise to your neighbor.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Love your neighbor as yourself." *St. Luke*, x.

"To love one's neighbor as himself is a greater thing than all holocausts and sacrifices." *St. Mark*, xii.

"Bear ye one another's burdens; and so shall you fulfil the law of Christ." *Galatians*, vi.

"But before all things, have a mutual charity among yourselves: for charity covereth a multitude of sins." 1 *Peter*, iv.

TWELFTH FRIDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON PARTICULAR FRIENDSHIPS AND NATURAL INCLINATIONS.

1st Point. The Samaritan did not ask his wounded neighbor what country he was from, or whether he was a Greek or a barbarian; he did not transfer to others the duties of charity that he owed this man; he did not say: It belongs to the priests and Levites to take care of, and heal this person, and not to me: I can do nothing. He did not make his ignorance of medicine serve as a pretext to get off; he did not excuse himself on account of the peril he would expose himself to, of falling into the hands of the robbers if he stopped; he did not spare his wine, oil, or silver. He placed him on his horse, and walked himself; he took him to a public house, and charged himself with his expenses while there. It is in this way that we ought to love all the world, without dif-

ference or exception; exclude none from our hearts, and do all the good we possibly can to the most miserable. To love only through inclination is to love like a beast; to love according to our inclinations is to love like a man; to love without inclination is to love like a Christian; to love against inclination is to love like a saint.

2d Point. Christian charity embraces all descriptions of persons, Jews, Samaritans, Greeks, barbarians, Christians, and pagans, the just and sinners, parents and strangers, friends and enemies, benefactors and malefactors, the good-tempered and the evil-tempered. The motives of charity proceed from one indivisible and universal love. If I love, for God's sake, him who pleases me, I must also love for his sake those who displease me, for both are the creatures of God, made to his image, both bought with his blood, both called to his glory. If, then, you say you love me, and not the other, you love none, for God is the cause and motive of all charity.

3d Point. I cannot love all the world equally, but the law of charity imperatively commands me to hate none. Charity ought to prefer the parent to a stranger, the Catholic to a heretic, the just to a sinner, but she must take into her heart all mankind, excluding no creature. Particular friendships are universal hatreds, unions of inclination in communities or families, are heresies of the heart. In proportion as you approach a person through tenderness, you will withdraw yourself from others who have claims on your charity.*

TWELFTH SATURDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE BAD EFFECTS OF PARTICULAR FRIENDSHIPS.

1st Point. Are you a religious? How necessary, then, it is to preserve the union of charity. If you are all things to one member of your community, you are nothing to the others; your conduct in their regard is unjust, inasmuch as you refuse them those marks of friendliness which are their due. In dividing the union of charity you wound it. You make exceptions and dangerous distinctions. Led on by this partiality of love, you soon come to despise regularity, you scandalize the community; fly solitude, while retreat and silence become at first irksome, then insupport-

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

able to you. You dare not present yourself before God, who reproaches you for your infidelities; you waste your love on an idol, to whom you sacrifice all your thoughts; your conversations are only so many murmurs against your superiors, you indulge in a spirit of detraction against your equals, and are betrayed into dangerous liberties; you regard your lapses and trespasses with indifference; your spirit is without recollection, your heart without devotion, your understanding without relish, your communions without fruits, your life without peace, and your labors without merit.

2d Point. Oh, what astonishment and distress will lay hold on you at the hour of death, when you discover that you have never loved any one with a true charity! For you have never loved any of your brethren for God's sake, if you have not loved them all without exception; if you except one your love is simply human and natural, and not Christian and divine. Oh, the time lost in these tender conversations! oh, these dangerous intimacies! oh, these useless discourses! oh, this interchange of criminal thoughts!

3d Point. Love for God's sake all descriptions of persons; for all are his creatures, his subjects, his children, his heirs, his members, and the purchasers of his blood. Love them because He loves them, and commands you to do so likewise; love the just and virtuous most of all, but be careful to discipline and conceal your love, lest you should give cause for jealousy to others. Show a greater degree of affection towards those for whom you feel the most aversion. An act of charity is necessary to obtain from God the pardon of your sins; and you cannot more effectually produce one than by doing good to them that you dislike, and for whom you feel no affection.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"For there is no respect of persons with God." *Romans*, ii.

"That you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven; who maketh his sun to rise upon the good and the bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust." *St. Matt.* v.

"And do you therefore love strangers; because you also were strangers in the land of Egypt." *Deuteronomy*, x.

"Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us? Why, then, doth every one of us despise his brother?" *Malachias*, ii.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE GOSPEL. *St. Luke*, xvii. 11–19.

"At that time, as Jesus was going to Jerusalem, He passed through the midst of Samaria in Galilee. And as He entered into a certain town, there met Him ten men that were lepers, who stood afar off: and they lifted up their voice, saying: Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. Whom when He saw, He said: Go show yourselves to the priests. And it came to pass that, as they went, they were made clean. And one of them, when he saw that he was made clean, went back, with a loud voice glorifying God. And he fell on his face, before his feet, giving thanks: and this was a Samaritan. And Jesus, answering, said: Were not ten made clean? and where are the nine? There is no one found to return and give thanks to God, but this stranger. And He said to him: Arise, go thy way; for thy faith hath made thee whole."

Meditation.

ON THE GOSPEL.

1ST POINT. Jesus is always passing along, and whithersoever He goes, He leaves marks of his goodness and divine compassion. St. Peter says: "*He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil.*" The true disciples of Jesus are bound, by his commands and his love, to imitate his example, and above all to show mercy and charity to all creatures. Wherever they may be they must heal the sick and cast out devils. They will find these objects of charity wherever they go; in the company they associate with, in their journeyings, and in the thronged city. Do you labor for the salvation of sinners? Their salvation often depends on a good word spoken in season.

2D POINT. Ten lepers approached Jesus. You will find an infinitely greater number on the road. They are sinners who are going to present themselves to the priests who will heal them. The leper is a figure of actual and habitual sin. Actual sin disfigures the soul, corrupts and cankers it; and when it passes into habit, becomes incurable. Is this your state? Are you not enslaved by sins of habit? Do you not feel sensible of your evil? Are you a leper? Go show yourself to the priest, and then present yourself to Jesus, who awaits you on the altar! Do not be afraid to approach Him, He will cure you in touching you,

provided that you have a true sorrow for your sins; touch Him with faith, and receive Him with humility.

There are two sorts of leprosies that afflict the soul; one of the understanding, another of the will. The leprosy of the mind is self-judgment; the leprosy of the will, self-love. Either of these forms disfigure the soul, render it miserable, and in time, incurable. The leprosy of the mind makes a man heretical, rebellious, opiniated, disobedient, and attached to the evidence of his own senses, in preference to the testimony of others. The leprosy of the will, renders a man sensual, avaricious, attached to his own interests, ambitious, and impatient under all that happens to him contrary to his own desires. Are you not infected with this dreadful malady? Do you not prefer your own judgment before that of your superiors? Do you not seek your own ease too much? Do you not fly from all mortification, and avoid every humiliation? Do you not suffer with impatience the inconveniences of ill-health, sickness, and poverty?

3d Point. The lepers presented themselves to Jesus because they were excluded from the city and the society of other men; they were driven out into the wilderness, lest others, by contact with them, should suffer from the contamination of their loathsome disease. Do you separate yourself from the society of wicked, impure, and scandalous persons? They are the lepers whose company is contagious to those who frequent it. There is no state more miserable than that of a diseased man, who is unconscious of his danger; but much more is he to be esteemed miserable who knows that he is sick, and does not desire to be cured. Are you not of this number?

The lepers knew all the evils of their state and desired to be healed, hence they came to Jesus; but they did not say to Him, Cure us of our malady; they lifted up their voices, saying: "*Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.*" Are you conscious of your leprosy? Do you wish to be cured? Oh, the leprosy of the soul is an incomparably greater evil than that of the body. Present yourself to Jesus, for you are the object of his tender compassion. Ask Him to have mercy on you. He knoweth all your misery; your humility and need are all powerful with Him, and He waits only to heal you.

THIRTEENTH MONDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE CURE OF THE LEPERS.

1st. Point. Jesus cast his eyes on the miserable and afflicted company, who standing afar off, besought his mercy. The look of Jesus is the beginning of all good. It convinced St. Peter of his fault, and inspired him with true repentance and tender compunction. If you have renounced the world, if you have changed your life, if you are no longer the slave of your passions, give thanks to Jesus who regarded you with an eye of compassion in your low estate.

2d Point. Go, He said to them, show yourselves to the priests. They obeyed Him without question, and as they went they were made clean. Oh admirable virtue of obedience which is productive of such surprising miracles! If you are not cured of your vices, it is to be feared that you have disobeyed your confessors and superiors. Jesus commanded them to show themselves to the priests, thereby showing a figure of the order He was about to establish in his Church, making it obligatory on all to confess their sins and evil habits to a priest. If you do not make known your maladies to those who are divinely authorized to heal them, what can you expect? Our Lord has made our salvation and perfection dependent on the obedience we render our confessors.

3d Point. There are multitudes who ask graces and favors of the Son of God, but only a few who return to thank Him after obtaining them. Of the ten lepers who were cured only one came back to thank Jesus, and he was a Samaritan. Ingratitude is a detestable vice, which dries up within us the fountain of God's mercies. How many graces have you received from our Lord? Have you thanked Him for them with all your heart? That which is demanded of you is, that you should give glory to God, acknowledging that it is from Him that you receive all the good that you possess; and offer Him, in return, all the love and obedience that your soul is capable of. He is infinitely rich, and has no need of you; it is only an accidental glory that He can receive from his creatures. He gives you all, and asks only your love, which is infinitely precious to Him. It was to receive the homage of your love that He created and placed you on earth and preserves your life. Does He, your God, ask too much of his creature?

Oh, ungrateful wretch that I am! instead of glorifying God, I have despised and dishonored Him; instead of giving Him glory, I have taken to myself the glory of all the blessings I have received from Him; not contented with His graces, I have sought to rob Him of his glory. Oh my God, what injustice! Oh my soul, glorify God with the Blessed Virgin, and you, my spirit, shall rejoice in God your Saviour, for He has cast the eyes of his mercy on your baseness and misery; He has done great and wonderful things for you: what, then, will become of you, if you do not attempt something great for Him?

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE

"I wrote to you in an epistle, not to keep company with fornicators." 1 *Corinthians*, v.

"If any man that is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, or a server of idols, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one, not so much as eat." *Ibid.*

"But he that will be proud, and refuse to obey the commandment of the priest, who ministereth at that time to the Lord thy God, that man shall die." *Deuteronomy*, xvii.

"He that hideth his sins shall not prosper: but he that shall confess and forsake them, shall obtain mercy." *Proverbs*, xxviii.

"And Raphael said to Tobias: As soon as thou shalt come into thy house, forthwith adore the Lord thy God, and giving thanks to Him, go to thy father and kiss him." *Tobias*, xi.

"What shall I render to the Lord, for all the things that He hath rendered to me? I will take the chalice of salvation: and I will call upon the name of the Lord." *Psalm* cxv.

THIRTEENTH TUESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON SICKNESS.

1st Point. Why does God afflict you with sickness and ill health? It is because He desires to draw his own glory from your acts of patience, love, and resignation, or to chastise you for your sins; to prove your virtue, or to maintain you in humility; to make you merit heaven, or bear part in the sufferings of his Son.

You despondingly say: I can do nothing. You can do much if you suffer much. You gain more merit by suffering than others

do by acting. It is agreeable to nature to act, but not to suffer; others work for you, and you suffer for them; they honor God by their actions, and you by your sufferings.

You well deserve all that you endure, and you merit much by endurance. You have acquitted yourself of the past, and laid up great treasures for the future. If God has deprived you of health, it is for your own sanctification. What wrong has He done you? Of what do you complain? He suffered for you, and you have now an opportunity to suffer for Him; He bore your cross, and you will bear his. Does not this consideration greatly console you?

2d Point. Your spirit is strong when your body is weak; your spirit is weak when your body is strong. Suffering disgusts us with the pleasures of this life; it makes us familiarize our thoughts with death, gives us a desire for it, reproves our ambition, puts to flight our irregular passions, it unites us to Jesus suffering, it lifts up our hearts to heaven, it gives us sweet assurances of the love of God for us, and certain pledges of our salvation.

My body, it is necessary to suffer in this world or the next. If you have offended God by a voluntary indulgence in pleasure, you must satisfy Him by an endurance of pain that is contrary to your will. Since you are defiled by the transgressions you have committed in this life, you ought to make your purgatory here, that you may escape that in the world to come. If you are not purified on earth, how will you enter heaven, where nothing defiled can find admission? Oh terrible necessity, to suffer on earth or in hell! You must choose one or the other. Consider which of these two evils is the least.

3d Point. Rejoice, my soul! sickness has placed your body, which is your mortal enemy, under subjection. Behold it without strength or vigor! It is no longer in a state to work out your ruin. You will now be consumed with a desire to suffer martyrdom; you will bless the tyrants that torment you. God has substituted the sufferings and inconvenience of sickness, instead of tyrants and martyrdom. Suffer sweetly and with patience, and you will become a martyr of faith and charity.

Oh my God, I deserve to be deprived of my health, since I have so long abused it by using it only to offend Thee. Oh I thank Thee for afflicting me in time, giving me a sign thereby, that Thou wilt console me in eternity. Chastise me, dear Lord, during this life, provided Thou wilt show me grace and mercy after death. Make my body a victim of patience, and let it be immolated to thy power, thy love, and thy justice. Cut and

scourge my flesh in time, if Thou wilt but spare me in eternity, and deliver me from the pains of hell.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"My son, in thy sickness neglect not thyself; but pray to the Lord, and He shall heal thee." *Ecclesiasticus*, xxxviii.

"Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak: heal me, O Lord, for my bones are troubled." *Psalm* vi.

"This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God." *St. John*, xi.

"Therefore will I take pleasure in my infirmities. . . . For when I am weak, then I am powerful." 2 *Corinthians*, xii.

"Behold thou art made whole: sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee." *St. John*, v.

THIRTEENTH WEDNESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON FLYING FROM BAD COMPANY AND ALL OCCASIONS OF SIN.

1st Point. Disguise yourself as you may, you will be known by the company you associate with. Like seeks like. You are like unto those whose society you frequent. If you go to the houses of vicious persons, there is too much reason to fear that you are also vicious, or that you will soon become so. Persons are apt to frequent the company of those they love, and whom they wish to resemble. If, then, you choose the wicked for your companions, you, too, are wicked.

2d Point. Good example is always salutary and productive of excellent fruits; bad example is evil, and produces evil fruits. Ignorance and modesty are the two bulwarks of virtue. One is ignorant, for the most part, of those crimes which they have never seen committed. They inspire only horror and disgust, until the wicked are seen glorying and rejoicing in them. Would you desire to eat with a leper? Is there any less danger in associating with the sinful and vicious? But are you not, yourself, one of those? Do you not give bad example to your neighbor? do you feel your evil? If you are sensible of it, how can you love it? if you are insensible to the evils and miseries of your state, you are an incurable leper.

3d Point. Example as it were ennobles crime, renders it just, proper, easy, necessary, and agreeable. One is ashamed to be in

nocent among the guilty, chaste among the impure, devout among libertines, a Christian among the impious. One has not courage to avoid a sin when it is supported by the example of the great. Are you not one of these masters of iniquity? Do you not give influence to vice by your scandals and bad example? do you not teach your children and domestics evils of which they were ignorant, and which reason detests and the law of God forbids and condemns?

It is in vain to hope to be good among the wicked. Evil is contagious to nature; it contracts it easily. The heart has a hankering for it, and readily imitates what it sees practised; it desires most of all those things which are forbidden. As the body readily contracts disease by going into a tainted atmosphere, or visiting those who are suffering with an infectious complaint, so the soul inevitably contracts the poison of sin, and the infection of evil example, by associating with the wicked.*

THIRTEENTH THURSDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. All the damned in hell declare that bad example was the cause of their eternal loss. It is natural and easy to imitate those whom we esteem, to be pleased with those we love, and frequent the society of those who minister to our pleasure. You will never find pleasure with the wicked unless you are also evil; it is necessary, then, to forsake or resemble them.

Do not be deceived, and say there is no danger or wrong in frequenting the society of the wicked, or that you can remain a lamb although you may live among wolves. Is not scandal a great evil? Can one love and seek without sinning the proximate occasions of sin? Who can believe you chaste, seeing that you associate with those who are not? As easily could a stream preserve the freshness of its waters in the midst of the sea, or a man live in the midst of pestilence and yet escape it. Alas, you are already dead if you do not fear that sickness of the soul which is unto eternal death!

2d Point. Example is a bad master. It teaches evil to those

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

who are ignorant of it, it persuades those to commit it who fear it, it ensnares those who would fly from it. One quickly learns that which he sees done, and speedily sets about doing what he learns. If you do not fly from the company of the wicked, occasions will not be wanting to make you sin; their example will ensnare you, temptation will urge you, fear will diminish, grace will grow weaker, and your modesty be effaced. After having sinned once or twice, habits of evil will be formed, custom will become a necessity, and necessity grow into contempt. Your understanding will become obscured, your heart hardened; you will find your only pleasure in those things which displease God, and consider it honorable and courageous to offend and outrage his divine majesty. Then you will fall into obstinacy and final impenitence.

3d Point. Christian soul, if your eye scandalize you pluck it out, if your foot or hand scandalize you cut it off. Separate yourself from those who are as dear to you as your eyes, as useful to you as your feet, and as necessary as your hands, if they have been an occasion of scandal to you. Do not attach yourself to those whose example you cannot imitate. Do not, at the peril of your soul, imitate those whom you ought not to love. Strive not to please those who displease God; have courage, and do not be afraid to displease them by persevering in your efforts to please Him. Fly from those who are separated from God, and conceive a great horror for all who despise God, and who are hated by Him. You have grace to abstain from all dangerous occasions of sin; if you find yourself therein, you have grace to fly; but if you remain, will your grace be sufficient to keep you from falling? Is it not presumption to promise yourself grace sufficient not to fall into sin? Trust not yourself in these occasions of sin, where your weakness will have to cope with a strong and powerful enemy, Satan, who is almost invincible because he spreads snares to entangle the unwary soul ere he destroys it. He who loves danger shall perish therein.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Be not a friend to an angry man; and do not walk with a furious man: lest, perhaps, thou learn his ways, and take scandal to thy soul." *Proverbs*, xxii.

"He that hath fellowship with the proud, shall put on pride." *Ecclesiasticus*, xiii.

"Depart from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest you be involved in their sins." *Numbers*, xvi.

"And if thy right eye cause thee to offend, pluck it out." *St. Matt.* v.

"And we charge you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw yourselves from every brother walking disorderly, and not according to the tradition which they have received of us." 2 *Thessalonians*, iii.

THIRTEENTH FRIDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON CHASTITY.

1st Point. The leprosy is a filthy disease which corrupts the flesh, and is a figure of that vice of impurity, which St. Paul refers to, but does not name. This leads us to make a meditation on the virtue which is opposed to it.

Jesus has a peculiar love for virgins; He chose for his mother, a young virgin and one who continued always a virgin; He cherished among his disciples those who were virgins; He is followed whithersoever He goeth in heaven, by a great and glorious company of virgins, "*purchased from among men, the first fruits to God and to the Lamb*," who "*are without spot before the throne of God.*"

2d Point. A virgin resembles an angel; her soul is the spouse of Jesus Christ; her body has a particular right to a glorious immortality. There are resplendent thrones in heaven, near the throne of the Lamb, for those virgins who follow Him on earth. Their glory shall far transcend the pain and difficulty of their conflicts.

Oh, what greater treasure than that of undefiled chastity. But it is a difficult virtue; and in order to preserve it, it is necessary to be humble and chaste. God humbles the proud; He suffers them to fall into shameful sins; He chastises the spirit through the body, and suffers to be clothed with the likeness of beasts, those who go astray from Him.

To govern well, it is essential to have learned the science of obedience. To be a good master, one must have been a good subject. The body is submissive to an obedient spirit; it readily yields to the power of a submissive soul, but it revolts against a rebellious one. The spirit which is disobedient to its superiors, loses all control over its inferiors.

3d Point. To be chaste it is necessary to mortify the body

A servant who is too much indulged and pampered, revolts against his master. Flesh meat becomes corrupt if it is not well salted. Those who have no sorrow, and feel no grief, think only of pleasure and the gratification of their senses.

To be chaste, it is necessary to guard the eyes and mortify the senses; it is necessary to fly all dangerous conversations. How can you avoid having evil thoughts, if you are always in bad company? The spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh is weak. Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation.

Oh my God, let me rather fall into hell than fall into the sin of impurity! The fires which consume the damned would be more supportable to me than the flames of concupiscence. Oh, I have reason to fear pride, since it plunges one into the infamous sin of impurity. I wish to be humble and chaste; I wish to obey my superiors, and hold my inferiors in subjection. Give me grace, O Lord, that I may be governed by the higher powers of my soul, mind and heart; and hold under subjection my will and passions.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"And incorruption bringeth us near to God." *Wisdom*, vi.

"Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved." *St. John*, xiii.

"These are they who were not defiled: for they were virgins. These follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." *Apocalypse*, xiv.

"For professing themselves to be wise, they became fools. Wherefore, God gave them up to the desires of their heart, to uncleanness: to dishonor their own bodies among themselves." *Romans*, i.

THIRTEENTH SATURDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON ZEAL FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.

"*There is no one found to return and give thanks to God but this stranger.*" St. Luke, xvii.

1st Point. Glory belongs alone to God. He condescends to let us participate with Him in all his treasures, but this He reserves for himself. It is the only thing He can receive from us. He desires that we should give Him glory. Is there any thing more glorious than for a creature to give something to God? He

honors those who honor Him; He glorifies those who glorify Him. He renders glorious on earth, and in heaven, those who glorify Him.

2D POINT. We were created that we might glorify God. It was for this that He has given us being; it was for this that He preserves us by his providence. He desires us to love Him, and to make Him known and loved to all the earth. God made all things for his own glory. What an honor it is for man to be allowed to work for the same end that God does! What injustice to refuse Him a right legitimately his own, and of which no one can rob Him!

3D POINT. "*The heavens*," says the Psalmist, "*show forth the glory of God.*" The sun, the moon, and stars, utter speech of his glory. The birds of the air sing his praises; the fish of the sea, although they are dumb, bless and adore Him; all creatures sacrifice themselves to his glory; and shall man, the most highly privileged of them all, instead of giving Him praise and glory, outrage and injure Him? Do you insolently endeavor to rob God of that which He reserves for himself alone? Are you not more haughty and ambitious than Lucifer? Glorify and praise God for this beautiful world that He has created. Consider yourself as the organ and interpreter of all creatures, through which they may bless their Creator. Return Him thanks, and praise Him in the name of all creatures who have not known Him; supply, by your zeal for his glory, the defects of those who do not love Him, of sinners who dishonor Him, and of the damned who are lost to Him, and of all the devils who blaspheme Him. Praise and glorify God in the name of all the angels of heaven, the blessed in paradise, and the just on earth. Render Him thanks for all his blessings and chastisements, for all joy and sorrow, for all grief and consolation. Proclaim, under every adversity, that He is good, that He is just, that He is holy. Be not like those who bless Him when He sends them good, and murmur when He afflicts them. Bless Him at all times and seasons, but chiefly in adversity. This is the greatest glory that you can give Him.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"There is no one found to return and give thanks to God but this stranger." *St. Luke*, xvii.

"With zeal have I been zealous for the Lord God of hosts." 3 *Kings*, xix.

"If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing: it is my Father that glorifieth me." *St. John*, viii.

"May the glory of the Lord endure forever." *Psalm* cxiii.

"For they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God." *St. John*, xii.

"Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name." *St. Matt.* vi.

SECOND OF JULY.

FEAST OF THE VISITATION.

Meditation.

ON THE MYSTERY.

1st Point. Jesus visited St. John, his precursor. Learn of Him humility. Our Blessed Lady visited her cousin, St. Elizabeth. Learn of her charity and humility. It was through the voice of Mary that Jesus sanctified the mother and son; for it came to pass, that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb: and she was filled with the Holy Ghost. The word of Mary was an instrument and channel of grace which gave sight to a blind man, delivered a captive, raised him that was dead to life, and justified a sinner. Jesus applied through her the first fruits of the redemption to man. She conceived spiritually a man, after having spiritually conceived a God. She became the mother of mankind, after having become the mother of God.

2d Point. Learn from this mystery, Christian soul, that Mary is the usual channel through which graces descend from heaven to earth. God, as the Father, refuses nothing to the Son, and grants nothing to men only in consideration of his merits; the Son refuses nothing to his Mother, and grants us his graces in consideration of her merits and prayers. Jesus is the source of all graces; Mary is the reservoir which receives them, and from whence they flow out over the body of the Church. On this day, which the Church celebrates, she became a channel of grace and a channel of mercy; of grace in regard to St. Elizabeth, of mercy in regard to St. John; of grace for the just, of mercy for sinners.

3d Point. Are you of the number of the just? Are you a sinner? If you are justified, thank our Blessed Lady for obtaining for you the grace of justification; if you are a sinner, implore her to obtain for you the grace of penitence and a true conversion. Consider the obligations you are under to Mary. Where would you be at this moment if she had not arrested the arm of God's

justice, which was raised to punish you according to your merits? Say, then, a hundred times a day: "*Hail to thee, full of grace; the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.*" Say, with St. Elizabeth: "*Blessed is the fruit of thy womb.*" Say, with the Holy Church: "*Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.*" Do not be satisfied with praying; but imitate the virtues she practised in this visit. She was the Mother of God, and she lowered herself to render service to a creature. She left her solitude by the direction of the Holy Ghost. From the time that she conceived our Lord she has been animated with an ardent zeal for the salvation of souls. She went with alacrity, because virgins ought not to be afraid of appearing in public. She went to the mountains because great souls always elevate themselves on high, and aspire to the greatest perfection. She did not stop or loiter on the road, but steadily advanced. She overcame all the difficulties of her journey. Charity animated her, and made her run to relieve the necessities of her neighbor. She saluted her cousin, and as soon as she had spoken, St. John leaped for joy, and both mother and son were filled with the Holy Ghost.

4TH POINT. Let your speech resemble our Blessed Lady's, and your words shall become a species of sacrament which will produce grace in the hearts of those to whom you address them; your tongue shall be the organ and instrument of the Holy Ghost. Alas! is it not rather the organ and instrument of the devil? It does not produce grace in the hearts of those who hear you; not life, but death which is eternal. Oh, pernicious tongue! more dangerous on earth than fire, poison, or sword. Make your conversation holy and useful to your neighbor; and when you hear yourself praised give all the glory to God. Recite with respect and devotion, every day, the beautiful canticle of our Blessed Lady: "*My soul doth magnify the Lord.*"

To honor this mystery, and imitate the immaculate Virgin, visit, as she did, those who are in prison; for St. John was, as it were, in prison, and the slave of sin and death; assist the miserable, console the afflicted, deliver captives, and be the means of the sanctification of sinners. Be a father and mother of grace to their souls; be a father and mother of mercy to their bodies. If you have conceived Jesus in the solitude of your heart, if you are filled with the Holy Ghost, you will be on fire with zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls; but remember, it is necessary to be full, in order to diffuse your plenitude; it is necessary to be all to God to draw others to his service.

Oh Mother of grace! visit us often with thy Son our Saviour. Thou art not wanting in grace, because the angel of God has assured us that thou art filled; thou art not wanting in mercy, since it erected its throne in thy womb and remained with thee nine months. Exercise it, through thy clement power, on one who is blind, a captive, and a sinner enveloped in darkness. Enlighten my soul with the light of faith. Deliver me from the captivity of the devil and my passions. Restore to it the life which it has forfeited by sin, and fill it with the Spirit of thy Son; make thy voice heard in the recesses of my heart, that my soul may give forth signs of life, a life sweet, strong, and efficacious. Speak but one word, and my heart shall be healed of all its diseases; for thou hast the word of God, who has given life to the world. Oh Mary, Mother of God! oh Mary, Mother of grace! oh Mary, Mother of mercy! defend us against our strong enemy, and assist our souls at the hour of death.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, because He hath visited and wrought the redemption of his people." *St. Luke*, i.

"Through the bowels of the mercy of our God: in which the Orient, from on high, hath visited us: to enlighten them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death: to direct our feet in the way of peace." *Ibid.*

"Visit us with thy salvation." *Psalm* cv.

"And it came to pass, that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb: and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost." *St. Luke*, i.

"Behold, my beloved speaketh to me: Arise, make haste, my love, my beautiful one, my dove, and come." *Canticles*, ii.

FIFTEENTH OF AUGUST.

FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Meditation.

ON THE DEATH OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

1st Point. There are three things which render the chalice of death bitter: the loss of the world, the separation of the soul from its body, and the account it is necessary to render to God. The loss of the world produces sadness; the separation of the soul

from the body produces grief; and the account which must inevitably be rendered at the tribunal of Justice, produces fear. Does not this consideration make you fear death?

2D POINT. Our Blessed Lady died without fear; she died without sadness; she died without grief. She died without fear, because she had lived without sin; she died without sadness, because she had lived without attachment to creatures; she died without grief, because she had lived without pleasure on earth.

Oh, let me die the death of the just, and let my last end be like Mary's. Live as the just live, and your end, like theirs, will be peaceful and happy. Live like Mary, and your death will resemble hers. Do you wish to die without fear? live without sin. Do you wish to die without sadness? live without attachment. Do you wish to die without grief? live without pleasure; for one leaves without pain that which he has not loved; and separates himself with joy from that which he has despised.

Deceive not yourself, Christian soul! If you live as sinners do, your death shall be like theirs, without peace or hope. If you live under the dominion of an ill-regulated heart, you will die in great confusion of mind. If you live in sin, you will die in fear; if you live in pleasure, you will die in grief. Remember my words, that which is your delight in life will be your torment in death; that which constitutes your sorrow in life will prove your consolation in death.

3D POINT. Oh, most holy Virgin! oh, Mother of God and men, my only hope after thy Son Jesus! it matters not to me what manner of death I shall die, for death will present no terrors to my soul if I die in a state of grace, and expire in thy arms. This shall be my strong hope, because I am determined to devote myself to thy service, knowing thou wilt not suffer thy servants to perish, and wilt help all who have the honor of serving Thee! Assist, then, at my death, as Thou didst at the death of thy divine Son. Having seen the Chief of the predestined die, Thou wilt receive in thy compassionate arms all the predestined.

4TH POINT. Behold and accept the resolutions that I have formed. I wish most earnestly to detach myself from the world, that I may die without sadness; I wish to afflict and mortify my body, that I may die without pain; to abstain from sin, that I may die without fear. I wish to live a suffering life, that I may die happily; I wish to live in labors, that in my death I may find sweet rest; I wish to live a child of Mary's, that I may die one of the predestined; I wish to live in grace, that I may die in grace.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"I conjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, that you tell him that I languish with love." *Canticle*, v.

"Love is as strong as death." *Canticle*, viii.

"Let my soul die the death of the just, and my last end be like to them." *Numbers*, xxiii.

"The death of the wicked is very evil." *Psalm* xxxiii.

"Strength and beauty are her clothing: and she shall laugh in the latter day." *Proverbs*, xxxi.

"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." *St. Luke*, xxiii

FOR THE SAME DAY.

Meditation.

ON THE RESURRECTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

1st Point. Our Blessed Lady is the most pure of all creatures; she ought, then, to be incorruptible. Her flesh was never soiled by any sin; she ought, then, to be exempt from decay. Her body was the temple of the august Divinity; it ought, then, to be holy and unprofaned. She was the best of all mothers, and ought, then, to be in the company of her divine Son, and reign with Him in heaven.

2d Point. If the body of Jesus gives to those who eat it a particular and glorious resurrection, who ought to rise if not she who gave unto Him that body; and if He declares to us that it is his will that his servants should be in heaven with Him, where ought his holy and immaculate Mother be? If this grace has been granted to slaves, who will doubt that the Queen of heaven has been favored likewise. Each one will gather that which they have saved: he who sows in corruption shall reap corruption; and those who sow in the Spirit, as our Blessed Lady did, ought they not to reap incorruption?

3d Point. Mary, like her divine Son, tasted death; like Him, she was laid in a sepulchre, and came forth from it like Him, and through Him, victorious over death and clothed in immortality. Why did she die? Because she wished to imitate Him, and drink of his chalice; because it was necessary to convince men that she was not an angel, but a woman; not a divinity, but a creature. She wished to encourage us to suffer death, and make us merit, conjointly with her Son, the grace of dying well.

4TH POINT. Why was she buried in a sepulchre? To imitate her Son, to render her death and resurrection certain, to sanctify the earth by the sacred deposit of her body; but she arose again to give us an assurance that we also shall one day rise from the grave, and to impart a new lustre to paradise, of which her body is the most glorious and magnificent ornament.

Oh, my glorious Queen, my whole heart and soul revolt, and refuse to believe that thy body, the most holy of all bodies, became the prey of worms and corruption, and that thou wert a slave to death, whose empire thou didst destroy!

Oh what a precious jewel in the sight of God is purity! and oh, how impurity is offensive and displeasing to Him! Why, oh ye women of the world, do you take such infinite pains to prepare food for the worms of the grave? Flesh which is not well salted shall be consumed by corruption, and the body that is not mortified, shall be given a prey to death and rottenness.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; nor wilt Thou give thy holy one to see corruption." *Psalm* xv.

"I have slept, and have taken my rest: and I have risen up, because the Lord hath protected me." *Psalm* iii.

"For what things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap. For he that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption: but he that soweth in the Spirit, of the Spirit shall reap life everlasting." *Galatians*, vi.

"Thou art all fair, O my love; and there is not a spot in thee." *Canticles*, iv.

"Come from Libanus, my spouse; come from Libanus, come; thou shalt be crowned from the top of Sanir and Hermon." *Ibid.*

"Who is this, that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning upon her beloved?" *Canticles*, viii.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE GOSPEL. *St. Matthew*, vi. 24–33.

"AT that time, Jesus said to his disciples: No man can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one, and love the other: or he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say to you, be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you

shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body more than the raiment? Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns, and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they? and which of you, by taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit? And for raiment why are you solicitous? Consider the lilies of the field how they grow: they labor not, neither do they spin. But I say to you, that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed like one of these. And if the grass of the field, which is to-day, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, God doth so clothe: how much more you, O ye of little faith? Be not solicitous, therefore, saying, what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the heathens seek. For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. Seek ye, therefore, first the kingdom of God, and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you."

Meditation.

ON THE GOSPEL.

1st Point. A body can have only one head; a kingdom can have only one king; a woman can have only one husband, and a man only one master; if he has two, he will love one and hate the other. You cannot, then, serve God and the world, Jesus Christ and Satan. If you love the world you will necessarily hate Jesus Christ. Examine your heart and see whether it is divided, and ascertain which master you serve. If it is Jesus, it is necessary to be all to Him, for He will not accept a divided heart; He desires all or none.

2d Point. Jesus is your only master; it is He who has created you, and bought you with his blood. He is infinitely beautiful, rich, sweet, perfect, liberal and good! He loves you with all the power of his great, and infinitely magnificent heart; He has done you infinite good in this life, and promises you infinite glory in the life to come. Does He not merit your love? Is He not entitled to your service by an indisputable right? Keep, then, his commandments, and detach your affections from creatures, because it is impossible to serve two masters.

3d Point. If you are not to Jesus, it follows that you must be to Satan, who is a barbarous tyrant, a frightful monster, a cruel spirit, a violent and sanguinary master, and the greatest enemy you have in the world. Which of these do you choose to serve?

Pilate was horrified when he found that the Jews preferred Barabbas to Christ; and you prefer Satan, a thief, a murderer from the beginning, and a seditious and rebellious spirit, to the Lord of life, your Saviour and King.

FOURTEENTH MONDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE SERVICE OF GOD.

1st Point. Those who serve God in spirit and in truth, are truly happy and always contented. The inexpressible peace that they enjoy, is the best proof of their belonging to the service of a Master who asks nothing unjust or unreasonable of them, but who on the contrary, makes all the commandments profitable to them, and establishes them in peace. He does their will, because they do his; He treats them as his children, makes them eat at his table, and lets them want for nothing; He watches over all their cares, and gives them the princes of his kingdom to lead them; He defends them in their combats, instructs them in their doubts, consoles them in their pains, and assists them in all their necessities. He loves them so tenderly that he has given his life for them, and shares with them his crown.

2d Point. The servants of the devil are miserable. They have rest neither in this life or the life to come; they are slaves to their passions, and are never contented. They are always agitated by fears and desires, and always at variance with God, with men, and with themselves. There is no rest for the wicked, saith the Lord. If they assure you that they are at peace, do not credit them, for they are the enemies of God, who war against Him and to whom peace is an utter impossibility.

3d Point. Ah, well, my soul! do you wish to be always miserable? Are you not convinced, by your own experience, that there is no happiness in displeasing God? Is He not your Father, your King, and your Master? What have you gained in the service of the devil? How unjust to be at war with your king! What ingratitude to fight against your own good, to trample under foot the most priceless benefits! What treachery to give your services to the enemy! What madness and blindness to prefer the service of Satan, the most detestable of all creatures, who can neither love you nor do you good, to God, your legitimate king, who loves you infinitely, who has loaded you with blessings, and

who will render you eternally happy! Which of the two will you choose, Jesus or Barabbas, God or the devil?

Oh, Jesus, my Lord! I desire no master but Thee. Thou shalt forever be the king of my heart, and the object of my love. Let the ambitious declare, they will have no king but Cæsar; let the avaricious cry out, that they will have no king but gold; let the voluptuous publish, that they will have no other divinity than the flesh; as for me, I will always, in time and in eternity, say, that Jesus is my king, my God, and my master!

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Because the Lord your God, He is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, a great God, and mighty, and terrible." *Deuteronomy*, x.

"If, then, I be a Father, where is my honor? and if I be a Master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts." *Malachias*, i.

"He is a jealous God." *Exodus*, xxxiv.

"Come not to Him with a double heart." *Eccles.* i.

"A heart that goeth two ways shall not have success; and the perverse of heart shall be scandalized therein." *Eccles.* iii.

"Whom will you that I release to you, Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" *St. Matt.* xxvii.

"Not this man, but Barabbas." *St. John*, xviii.

"I have brought up children and exalted them; but they have despised me." *Isaias*, i.

FOURTEENTH TUESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE OBLIGATIONS WE ARE UNDER TO SERVE GOD.

1st Point. Because God is the first and most glorious of all beings; because He has formed me with his hands, and created me to his own image; because He has made me to serve Him, delivered me from the hell I merited, given his life for me, nourished me with his own flesh, animated me with his spirit, sanctified me through his grace, and promises me his glory, I will be all to Him, and never serve any other master.

2d Point. He has loved me from all eternity, and burns unceasingly with a love that is past all human understanding for me.

He has done me infinite good; He has pardoned me infinite crimes. In giving me his Holy Spirit, He has given me his heart, and has implored me to give Him mine. I shall never know peace, if I am not all to Him. He desires only my good, and it is only to render me happy that He wishes me to love Him. He gives himself all to me, without division. To serve Him is more honorable than to reign. I shall be eternally miserable if I do not serve Him. Oh, I wish, then, to be all to Him! I wish to have no other master than God!

3D POINT. The world is deceitful, its grandeurs imaginary, its goods perishable, its pleasures false, impure and short lived. It rewards those who serve it with mortal vexations, and an eternity of sufferings after death. God is the best of all masters; the devil the most wicked and merciless. Oh, I wish, then, to serve God, to love Him with all my heart, keep his commandments, and sacrifice myself to his glory.

Oh, my God! let me cease to live, if I do not desire to live for Thee; combat my desires, if I wish for any other good than Thee; make me miserable, if I seek any other joy than Thee. Is it a small honor to serve so glorious and magnificent a king? Is there any other master from whom I can hope for such a vast recompense? Can I hope for any thing more sweet, more rich, more powerful, more just and amiable, than Thee, O my God? I will, then, serve because I love Thee! I desire no other recompense than the honor of having served Thee. All creatures are subject to, and serve me; and shall I refuse to serve Thee? Their lives are sacrificed to preserve mine; and shall I withhold the offering of mine to thy glory? It is no profit to them to have served me; but I cannot serve Thee without recompense. Who will not, then, serve Thee?

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend. In whom I have taken thee from the ends of the earth, and from the remote parts thereof have called thee, and said to thee: Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and have not cast thee away." *Isaias*, xli.

"Fear not, for I am with thee: turn not aside for I am thy God: I have strengthened thee, and have helped thee, and the right hand of my just One hath upheld thee." *Ibid.*

"I am thine, save Thou me." *Psalm* cxviii.

"Whether we live, or whether we die, we are the Lord's." *Romans*, xiv.

"For you are bought with a great price." 1 *Corinthians*, vi.

"I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid." *Psalm* cxv.

"Because thou didst not serve the Lord thy God with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things: thou shalt serve thy enemy, whom the Lord will send upon thee, in hunger, in thirst, and nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put an iron yoke upon thy neck, till he consume thee." *Deuteronomy*, xxviii.

FOURTEENTH WEDNESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

"*You cannot serve God and mammon.*"

1st Point. The avaricious are devoid of faith; their sentiments are contrary to the Gospel. Jesus declares the poor blessed; but the avaricious pronounce them miserable. Jesus declares the rich miserable, and the avaricious esteem them happy. Any one who really believes that the poor are happy, would doubtless wish to be poor himself. And again, if he believes that the rich are miserable, he would not wish to be rich. Faith is opposed to the passion of avarice. To preserve one, it is necessary to divest one's self of the other. If you wish to preserve faith, you must renounce avarice.

2d Point. The avaricious do not hope for the goods of another life, for who can hope for those things which they place no faith in? If they believe that true riches are in heaven, why do they not make some effort to acquire them? They are indifferent concerning the existence of a God, because they expect nothing from Him. This is the reason why they never pray; or, if they do, it is to appear what they are not. What can the rich hope for, when the poor accuse them before God? Do they not idolize their gold? Do they not sacrifice all their thoughts, energies, and mind to it? Do they not place their confidence, and establish their happiness in it? Examine yourself, and see if you are not one of these impious, unfaithful, and idolatrous persons. What are your thoughts? Whither do your desires tend? Why do you give yourself so much trouble and disquietude?

3d Point. The avaricious are without charity; their heart is with their treasure. Can a person serve two masters? Can one love God and mammon? Cupidity destroys charity. The cupidity of riches is infinite; it occupies the heart exclusively and

allows no division thereof. Oh, it is difficult to realize great gains without committing great injustice. Those who wish to enrich themselves, always imagine that they are poor; they take all they can get, and return nothing that they take. Their nature is satisfied with moderation, but the passion which possesses them is insatiable, and sets no bound to its desires. Legitimate gains are few; those that are great are often the result of great frauds and accumulated acts of injustice. How, then, can the rich, who are without faith, hope, or charity, be saved?

FOURTEENTH THURSDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE MISFORTUNE OF RICHES.

1st Point. Without penance and good works, there is no salvation. The avaricious cause poverty, but assist not the victims thereof; they labor to make others miserable, but do not assist them in their misfortunes and misery; they commit infinite sins, but this degrading passion deprives them of the knowledge or consciousness thereof, and prevents their conceiving a sorrow for them. All their frauds appear just and innocent, as stolen waters are sweeter, says the wise man, than those which we are permitted to use. It is a difficult thing to restore that which has cost some trouble to take. As all the evil passions of nature contribute to instigate and effect a theft, so do they all contend in its defence. Without restitution, all hopes of pardon are vain.

2d Point. Is not your heart a slave to this passion? have you not too great a desire for riches? are you rich? do you wish to be so? if you are rich, it will be easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for you to enter into the kingdom of heaven. If you desire riches, you will fall into temptation, and, perhaps, into hell. What! will you damn yourself for perishable goods, which tear and consume the heart in life, and cause eternal weeping and gnashing of teeth after death? You brought nothing into the world, and it is certain that you will carry nothing out of it.

3d Point. Blessed is he who contents himself with God; woe unto him whom God cannot content. Gold and silver are the gods of the Gentiles, but the God of heaven is mine. It is in Him that I hope, for Him that I labor, and in Him I rest. "O my

God!" I say with St. Paulinus, "all the possessions of this world can neither disturb or torment me, for Thou knowest where my treasure is. Thou also knowest that my heart is with it." I shall be rich if I am contented, but I can never be contented if I am rich. I must, then, seek all my contentment in loving and serving Thee, for all else is only illusion, deceit, and vanity.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Labor not to be rich: but set bounds to thy prudence." *Proverbs*, xxiii.

"The eye of the covetous man is insatiable in his portion of iniquity: he will not be satisfied till he consume his own soul, drying it up." *Ecclesiasticus*, xiv.

"For they who would become rich fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men in destruction and perdition." 1 *Timothy*, vi.

"For covetousness is the root of all evils; which some desiring have erred from the faith, and have entangled themselves in many sorrows." *Ibid.*

"There is not a more wicked thing, than to love money: for such a one setteth even his own soul to sale." *Ecclesiasticus*, x.

"How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God. For it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." *St. Luke*, xviii.

FOURTEENTH FRIDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON CONFIDENCE IN GOD FOR THE NECESSARIES OF LIFE..

1st Point. Why trouble yourself concerning the necessaries of life? Does not God know all that you need? Can He not supply your every want? Do you believe that He will be so unmerciful as to refuse you that which is necessary? Where is there a father so unnatural as to refuse to provide food and clothing for his children? If they ask bread of him, will he give them a stone or a serpent? You do not doubt that God will give you eternal possessions in the life to come; how, then, can you doubt that He will supply the temporal necessities of this? You believe without hesitation that He will give you his kingdom, and

do you doubt that He will give you bread? Will He who gives so much refuse so little?

2D POINT. Jesus commands you not to be troubled concerning the necessities of the body. "*Is not the life*," saith He, "*more than meat, and the body more than raiment?*" Will He who gave you a soul before you came into the world, refuse to give you nourishment for your body? and He who has given you a body, will He refuse you wherewith to clothe it? The birds of the air neither sow nor reap, nor do the lilies of the field toil or spin, notwithstanding which God provides them with all that is necessary, although He is not their Father in the same sense that He is yours; and do you believe that He who provides so carefully for a plant or bird which he created for his children, will refuse whatsoever they need to these same children?

3D POINT. It is in vain that you torment yourself to amass riches. As you cannot add one cubit to your stature, you will be unable to increase your fortune, or multiply your goods, unless God blesses your endeavor. It was in a manner excusable in the Gentiles, who believed not in God, to be absorbed in the pursuit of gain; but should Christians, who have a Father in heaven, trouble themselves on account of the goods of this life? Is it not He who dispenses all the treasures of nature and grace to whomsoever He pleases? He offers them to you on one condition. What is it? "*Seek first*," saith He, "*the kingdom of God and his justice, and all things shall be added unto you.*" Honor God and He will honor you; attend to his interests and He will attend to yours; give Him what He asks, and He will grant what you desire; seek the spiritual and you shall have the temporal; take care, above all things, to do his will, and He will do yours.

Oh Christian! why do you complain? If you are miserable, you alone are the cause of your misery. You sin, and yet desire that God should be good to you; you will not obey God, and yet you wish Him to be favorable to your demands; you wage war against Him, and wish Him still to bestow his blessings on you! Is this just? Hope in God, and do his will, and He will load you with goods, honors, and happiness.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Who giveth to beasts their food, and to the young ravens that call upon Him." *Psalm* cxlvi.

"The eyes of all hope in Thee, O Lord; and Thou givest them meat in due season." *Psalm* cliv.

"The Lord ruleth me, and I shall want nothing." *Psalm* xxii.

"Casting all your solicitude upon Him, for He hath care of you." 1 *Peter*, v.

"And they spoke ill of God: they said: Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?". *Psalm* lxxvii.

"Cast thy care upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee; He shall not suffer the just to waver forever." *Psalm* liv.

"What man is there among you, of whom, if his son ask bread, will he reach him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he reach him a serpent?" *St. Matt.* vii.

FOURTEENTH SATURDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE END OF MAN, WHICH IS TO SEEK THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

1st Point. I came from God. I belong only to God. I am in the world only to serve God. I subsist only by the strength and through the goodness of God. I can be only for God. It was not necessary that I should come into the world; but, since I am here, it is necessary that I should be all to God, and live only for God.

2d Point. Every thing speaks to me of God; every thing draws me to Him; every thing convinces me of the greatness and majesty of God; every thing says and declares that I do not merit life if I do not live for God; that I am not worthy to possess a heart if I love any thing but God; that I cannot serve two masters; that I must serve either God or the devil.

3d Point. Oh, what an honor to belong to God! How consoling to be engaged in the service of so good a Master! He who possesses God is rich and happy indeed. My soul, from whence came you? whither are you going? to what are you tending? what is it you seek? are you not a creature of God? did not He give you being? Is it not to love and serve Him that He has placed you in the world? Why, then, despise Him? why continue to offend Him? why render service to the devil, his enemy, and do every thing but what you ought to do?

Oh, my God! I have been up to the present, strangely blind and deluded! I have fallen into strange wanderings! Behold! my life will soon pass, and I shall not have commenced to do that for which I was placed in the world. I have lived for myself and not for Thee. I have sought only my own glory, my own pleasure and satisfaction. Oh, what impiety! what ingratitude and what injustice!

Pardon me, my God, and receive the protestation that I now make, to live only for Thee, to serve no other Master than Thee, to desire only Thee, to love Thee in all things, and to love all things in and for Thee.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Oh Lord, make me know my end. And what is the number of my days: that I may know what is wanting in me." *Psalm* xxxviii.

"This people have I found for myself: they shall show forth my praise." *Isaias*, xliii.

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, saith the Lord God, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." *Apocalypse*, i.

"Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken. I have brought up children and exalted them; but they have despised me." *Isaias*, i.

"Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof?" 1 *Corinthians*, ix.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE GOSPEL. *St. Luke*, vii. 11–16.

"At that time, Jesus went into a city called Naim: and there went with Him his disciples and a great multitude. And when He came nigh to the gate of the city, behold a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother: and she was a widow: and much people of the city were with her. And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her, and said to her: Weep not. And He came near and touched the bier. (And they that carried it, stood still.) And He said: Young man, I say to thee, arise. And he that was dead, sat up, and began to speak. And He delivered him to his mother. And there came a fear on them all: and they glorified God, saying: A great prophet is risen up amongst us, and God hath visited his people."

Meditation.

ON THE GOSPEL.

1ST POINT. Jesus approached the dead man: He touched the bier on which he lay, and restored him to life. Devils would have borne you to hell long ago, and you would be there at this

moment, if the Blessed Virgin, your good mother, had not, by her tears and prayers, moved her Son to compassion, and caused Him to restore you to life. He gave you to her; you, then, belong to her by the title of donation, without speaking of others.

2d Point. Oh, holy and tender Virgin! how shall I thank thee for so great a benefit? Oh, I have made thee shed tears! Oh, I thank thee for having drawn me from hell an infinite number of times, and obtained again for me the life that I had lost. Lord, have mercy on me! "*Remember that I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid.*" Since Thou hast given me to thy mother, I am sure that Thou desirest to save me; and I hope that, touched by her tears, Thou wilt give me life and glory as Thou hast given me grace.

The bier on which the dead man lay was made of sombre wood, whose dark color was emblematic of death; but as soon as Jesus touched it, it became a tree of healing, which restored life to the dead. If the wood which Jesus touched was infused with a virtue so admirable by his mere touch, what ought not one to hope for after communion, when Jesus touches your body and soul, and takes your heart within his own to animate and sanctify it? Can you not love Him after this?

If this man, immediately after having risen, had said injurious things of our Lord; if he had betrayed Him to the Jews, and conspired with them to put Him to death, who would not have execrated him? Who would not have declared that such a monster of ingratitude was unworthy of life? See, however, what you are guilty of every day. After Jesus has, by the sacrament of penance, restored you to life, and touched you in the holy communion, instead of thanking Him for this great benefit, you soon after attempt to take his life; you outrage and crucify Him anew in your hearts! Oh, ye heavens, be astonished at this ingratitude!

3d Point. "*Young man, I say to thee, arise,*" said Jesus Christ, and, obeying the mandate of the Lord, he immediately arose and spoke. You have been dead for a length of time, or, as a dead person, you have lived in a strange and lethargic state. Hear the voice of Jesus, who says unto you, "My child, arise! my daughter, come forth from this state of tepidity and this mortal lethargy which deprives you of the functions of life. Arise, and work out your salvation, and sing the praises of God. How often has Jesus spoken thus to you? Has He not commanded you to arise this day, to forsake the sin to which you are subject, and change your life? Notwithstanding you refuse to obey his voice, you remain

deaf and dumb, and continue in a state of lukewarmness which is worse than death.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"The hand of the Lord hath touched me." *Job*, xix.

"Rise, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ will enlighten thee." *Ephesians*, v.

"Thou hast lifted me up from the gates of death, that I may declare all thy praises in the gates of the daughter of Zion." *Psalm* ix.

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and death shall be no more." *Apocalypse*, xxi.

FIFTEENTH MONDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON DEATH.

1st Point. You shall surely die once, and only once; you know not where, or in what manner, or in what state you will die; you will die sooner than you expect to; and if you are not on your guard, you will die without preparation.

2d Point. As your life has been, so will your death be. One cannot learn in a moment a science of which they had no previous knowledge, or forget in a moment that with which they have always been familiar. You have never learned to make acts of faith, hope, and charity: how, then, will you be able to do it when you are sick? You know no other science than that of offending God: how will you learn better when you are dying? Will you love God at the hour of death, after having hated Him all your life? will you hate sin when you come to die, after having loved it all your life?

3d Point. After death you shall be judged; after judgment you shall be saved or damned! What will you then wish to have done? what will you wish not to have done? what wish to have suffered? what wish not to have suffered? Do now those things which you will then wish to have done, and abandon that which you will wish not to have done; suffer with patience that which you will wish to have suffered, and do not suffer that which you will wish not to have suffered.

You will leave all your possessions at the portals of eternity;

your glory will not descend with you into the grave; your pleasures will be turned to bitterness, and your love to hatred. You will take with you from this life only the good and evil that you have done; the good to be recompensed, the evil to be punished. That which constitutes your happiness during life will be your torment after death; and that which has been your torment during life shall be your triumph and happiness through eternity, if you have suffered in and for God.

Oh, death! oh, judgment! oh, salvation! oh, damnation! I am bereft of reason if I reflect not on death! I am inordinately attached to life if I fear death; I do not love Jesus if I desire not death; I am an enemy to myself if I neglect to dispose myself for death; I deserve not to be saved if I do not fear being damned; I abuse the time and grace of God if I prepare not for eternity.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Behold, the days of thy death are nigh." *Deut.* xxxi.

"O death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that hath peace in his possessions." *Ecclesiasticus*, xli.

"Be ye also ready: for at what hour you think not, the Son of man will come." *Luke*, xii.

"Take order with thy house, for thou shalt die, and not live." *Isaias*, xxxviii.

FIFTEENTH TUESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE NECESSITY OF PREPARING FOR DEATH.

1st Point. Are you ready to die? Have you put your affairs in order? Have you any thing of greater importance than your salvation to engage your attention? Do you expect to escape death? You know not the day nor the hour of its coming. It may come at any moment. Why should it not come to-day?

You think only of living, and not of dying; you work only for time, and not for eternity. Small affairs demand but little care; great affairs demand much. Is there any affair greater than that of your salvation? There is but little time to think of death when the time comes to die. Is it a proper time to prepare for judgment when the hour of judgment arrives?

2d Point. Persons take great pains to learn the business which is to occupy them. The chief business of all men is their salva-

tion. It is not necessary to study in order to die well, but it is necessary to learn to die well. One can never know too well how to do that which he will only do once in his life. To die well once it is necessary to die often.

Is life too long a time to prepare for death? Is time too much to think of eternity? How will you be able to make one act of love for God, having always hated Him? How will you hate sin, having always loved it? One easily makes those acts which have been acquired by habit. If you then accustom yourself to the thought of dying, and a preparation thereof, you shall die well.

Judgment follows death, and eternity follows judgment. Are your accounts ready? When your Almighty Judge shall question you, will you know how to reply? Will there be time to learn the science of warfare when the enemy is on you? Is there any time or opportunity to fortify a citadel when it is besieged on all sides?

Watch, or death will surprise you. Prepare for it, if you would not have it come on you unawares. He who does not watch is surprised, and he who is surprised by death is like one taken in a deadly snare.

3d Point. Trust not to time—it is a bad safeguard. Reckon not on your health—it is like treacherous ice which will slip from beneath your feet, when you think yourself in perfect safety. Never is death nearer than when one believes it to be afar off. How many are there whom death has surprised?

Oh my God, I thank Thee for having given me time to prepare for death. Where would I be if Thou hadst surprised me? What should I do if it were necessary for me to die now? I wish henceforth to be on my guard, since I have a vigilant and powerful enemy, who sets snares for me on every side. In order to die well, I will die to myself every day of my life. I will meditate on death, and by the grace of God, prepare for it, that when the hour comes I may be found ready.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Remember that death is not slow." *Ecclesiasticus*, xiv.

"Watch ye, therefore; because ye know not the day nor the hour." *St. Matt.* xxv.

"If then thou shalt not watch, I will come to thee as a thief; and thou shalt not know at what hour I will come to thee." *Apocalypse*, iii.

"Watch ye, therefore; because ye know not at what hour your Lord will come." *St. Matt.* xxiv.

FIFTEENTH WEDNESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE CERTAINTY OF DEATH AND THE NECESSITY OF RESIGNATION.

1st Point. What do you fear, Christian soul? Why do you fear death? Have you not courage to do that which even little children have done? Can you not suffer that which the smallest insects have suffered? Of what use would life be if it were never to end? Is it not the gift of God? Has He not a right to deprive you of it? He has given you the use of it, but reserved for himself the proprietorship thereof. It is a deposit which, sooner or later, it will be necessary for you to return. Are you ready to return it? Is it in a good condition?

2d Point. It is folly to be afraid of becoming acquainted with a thing which is inevitable. It is natural to fear doubtful things, and wise to expect that which is certain. To escape death it would be necessary not to have been born. Are you of better condition than kings? Shall you be more privileged than Jesus Christ? If you had been immortal, you would have asked of Him the grace and privilege of dying as He did.

You are a criminal condemned to death. The sentence has been pronounced from the beginning of the world. Oh sentence, most favorable! oh sentence, which will procure you infinite good and glory! Death is not an evil, but an inestimable good, since it gives us admission into heaven.

3d Point. It is true that the judgments of God are terrible, but his mercies are infinite. It is good to fear, but better to hope. He who hopes in God shall not be confounded. He who abandons himself to God shall not be abandoned by God. Will your condition be improved by a long life? You will only increase instead of diminishing your debts.

You say that you will do penance, and you have not yet commenced. There is no penance more meritorious than to accept death in satisfaction for one's sins. Man can offer nothing to God which will equal the sacrifice of his life.

Oh, my God! I esteem myself happy in being able to die for Thee! Since I cannot be a martyr of faith, I desire to be one of charity, that I may die for love of Thee. It is not a great thing to die, but it is a great thing to die well. Death may take from

me my strength, but my life, oh my God, I give to Thee through love. I give to charity that which I cannot refuse to necessity.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Better is death than a bitter life; and everlasting rest than continual sickness." *Eccles.* xxx.

"Oh death, thy sentence is welcome to the man that is in need, and to him whose strength faileth. Who is in a decrepit age, and that has care about all things." *Ibid.* xli.

"Fear not the sentence of death. Remember what things have been before thee, and what shalt come after thee: this sentence is from the Lord upon all flesh." *Ibid.*

"For we know that if our earthly house of this habitation be dissolved, that we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in heaven." 2 *Corinthians*, v.

"Unhappy man that I am: who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" *Romans*, vii.

FIFTEENTH THURSDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE DISPOSITIONS OF A PIOUS SOUL NEAR DEATH.

1st Point. They have told me that I am about to die. Oh, sweet and agreeable news! About to leave this earth to go to heaven; going from my prison to enjoy perfect liberty; going to leave this exile to return to my dear country; going to pass from time to eternity; from the figure to the substance, from death to immortality, from misery to happiness!

I am going to possess and contemplate God, and forever enjoy his presence; I am going to rest on his bosom, and transform myself into Him; I am going to fill my spirit with a plenitude of light, my will with a plenitude of peace, my memory with a plenitude of joy. I will find in heaven all that I desire and nothing that I fear; I shall have no evil, and want for no good; God will be all to me, and I shall find all in Him.

2d Point. They tell me that I am going to die. Oh sweet and agreeable news! I am going to a place of rest, to the land of the living, to the kingdom of peace, to the palace of glory, to the nuptials of the Lamb, to the feast of God and his holy angels; going to see that which eye hath never seen, to hear that which ear hath

never heard; to possess that which the human heart hath never conceived; going to a country where I shall no longer be bowed down by misery, suffer no more inconvenience, and never again be subject to sin, and in danger of being damned; where I shall find nothing to give me pain; where I will see God without a veil, will love Him, praise and bless Him forever!

Go, then, my soul! depart from this miserable life; leave this suffering and unhappy body. What do you fear? Jesus died for you; He has made satisfaction for your sins, and cancelled all your debts; He is your advocate with the Father; He is your intercessor; and He has promised that you shall enter into his rest if you hope in Him; He has given you his body and blood as a pledge of the consummation of his word; He has done you infinite good, and preserved you from infinite dangers.

If He had desired your damnation, would He have died for you? would He have preserved your life so long? would He have waited for you with so much patience? enlightened you with so much knowledge? invited you with so much love? drawn you with so much strength, and favored you with so many graces? Would He have given you time to do penance? would He have visited you in sickness? would He have sanctified you by the reception of the sacraments, and marked you with the seal of the predestined?

If you bewail your sins you shall be saved; if you convert yourself, from the depths of your heart, your sins shall be pardoned. One sigh of true repentance will gain heaven. Repentance is never too late when it is sincere. My soul! behold, Jesus calls you, and extends his arms towards you; He prays for you on his cross, and implores his Father to pardon those who crucify Him; He bows his head to kiss you; extends his arms to embrace you; opens his heart that you may enter into its sacred shelter; gives his life and blood to ransom and save you. After this, what reason have you to be afraid?

Depart, my soul! I am contented to die, since it is the will of God; to die because He commands it; to die for his glory, die for his love, die through gratitude, die through justice, die because He died, die to behold Him, die to love Him, die to honor, to praise, and to bless Him through all eternity!

3d Point. Oh, Father of mercy! behold a prodigal child, who returns to Thee after having consumed his life and goods in riotous living! Alas! I have lived without reason since I came to the use of reason; I have done only evil since I came to the knowledge of good. My Father! I have sinned against heaven, and in

thy sight, and am not worthy to be called thy child; I am not worthy of being received into thy house. But can it be that Thou hast ceased to be a Father because I am no longer worthy of being thy child? Hast Thou lost thy goodness because I have lost my innocence; art Thou no longer a Father of mercy because Thou hast a child loaded down with misery?

Oh my Father! oh best of all fathers! have compassion on the most miserable of all thy children. I was lost, and Thou didst find me; I was dead, and Thou didst restore me to life. Receive me into thy house; give me the kiss of peace; pardon me my offences, and clothe me in the nuptial robe; allow me to eat at thy table, and give me a place at thy celestial feast.

Oh Jesus, Physician of the helpless sick, Consoler of the afflicted, Redeemer of captives, only hope of sinners, behold me before Thee, without strength, motion, or words! But Thou dost understand the language of my heart, which tells Thee that I am consumed with desire to behold Thee, and impatient to be released from these bonds of flesh. Come speedily, oh good Jesus! Liberate my soul from its prison, and conduct it to its dear country. Oh, thy tabernacles are glorious! thy palace beautiful! I shall only be contented and at rest in heaven; shall be happy only in thy company.

Holy and immaculate Mother of God! thou didst assist at the death of thy only Son; do not abandon me now. I am thy child and thy servant. Wilt thou suffer one of thy children to remain a slave of the devil? Oh, I hope thou wilt assist me in this last conflict, and render me victorious over my enemies! I place my life, my soul, my death, and my salvation in thy hands.

Angels of heaven, come to my succor! Take up arms in my defence. After having saved me from so many shipwrecks let me not perish in port. Depart, then, my soul; hoping in divine mercy, ascend to thy God. I am ready, oh my God, ready to live, ready to die, ready to perform thy will, whatever it may be, for time and eternity. Amen.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"I rejoiced at the things that were said unto me: We shall go into the house of the Lord." *Psalm* cxxi.

"Blessed are they who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb." *Apocalypse*, xix.

"In the Lord I put my trust." *Psalm* x.

"For what have I in heaven, and besides Thee what do I desire on earth? For Thee my flesh and my heart hath fainted away;

Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever." *Psalm* lxxii.

"One thing I have asked of the Lord, this will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life." *Psalm* xxvi.

"How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord." *Psalm* lxxxiii.

"Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, O Lord: they shall praise Thee forever and ever." *Ibid.*

FIFTEENTH FRIDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Paraphrase.

ON THE "PATER NOSTER," TO DISPOSE ONE TO DIE WELL.

"*Our Father.*"

1st Point. I believe, my God, that thou art my Father, who hast given me a life of nature and of grace, and of whom I hope that of glory. Since Thou art the Father of all men, can I not call Thee mine? Oh, how rejoiced I am that I have a Father so good, so holy, so wise, so powerful, and so merciful! Since Thou hast given me corporal life, I hope Thou wilt give me eternal.

My Father! I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight. I am not worthy to be called thy child, but receive me, I beseech Thee, into the number of thy servants.

My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice of death pass away from me; nevertheless let thy will, not mine, be done.

Oh my Father, I return to Thee the life Thou hast given me. I am covered with confusion because I have made so bad a use of it, and made it serve to offend Thee.

My Father! glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify Thee. Since I have not honored Thee on earth, I beseech Thee to let me praise and honor Thee eternally in heaven.

"*Who art in heaven.*"

2d Point. Thou, my God, art in heaven, and I am on earth; Thou art in a land of peace, and I am in a place of perpetual combat; Thou art in heaven to recompense me, and I am on earth to love, serve, and honor Thee. Alas! I have not yet begun it! Wicked and ungrateful as I am, I still hope to be in heaven with Thee, and my hope is founded on the precious blood

that thy dear Son shed for me. Oh! when will that joyful day arrive? when will this earth become distasteful to me? when will the contemplation of heaven absorb my thoughts? Oh, sweet heaven! what ought one not to be willing to suffer to merit thee? All that I endure is nothing in comparison with the glorious prize that I hope to win.

"*Hallowed be thy name.*"

3D POINT. Adorable name of my God! I was created that I might glorify Thee, and I have only profaned Thee. I have done all things for my own glory instead of thine. I humbly beseech Thee to pardon me, oh King of glory and majesty, and I conjure Thee, by thy holy name, to show me mercy.

Oh, holy name of Jesus, Thou art my sole hope! Whoever will invoke Thee with faith and confidence shall be saved. I will invoke Thee, with all my heart and with all the devotion of my soul, while life lasts; oh, then, be my strong defence in my last combat, and suffer me not to be overcome.

"*Thy kingdom come.*"

4TH POINT. When will it be, oh my God, that thy kingdom will come? When wilt Thou reign peacefully in my heart? When wilt Thou be absolute master of my soul and body? Alas, I have not made Thee reign on earth! All my life have I protested that I had no other king than Cæsar. It is for this that I have merited death, and have condemned myself. I accept it with all my heart; I ask for it, but hope that, after death, Thou wilt give me entrance into thy eternal kingdom. Oh happy are those who serve Thee faithfully in this life, for they will reign with Thee eternally in heaven!

My soul, console thyself; behold, the kingdom of God is at hand! thou hast only a moment to suffer, and this moment of suffering will suffice to procure for thee an eternal weight of glory. Fight to the end, and lose not the crown that God has prepared for you; greatly wilt thou prize a kingdom won by the loss of blood and tears.

"*Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.*"

5TH POINT. Oh my God, since I have not done thy will during life, let me at least do it in dying. Behold my body borne down with suffering; the sorrows of death encompass me on every side. I desire only to prolong my life to repair the faults that I have committed, and to purchase back the time I have lost. Notwith-

standing, if Thou dost desire me to die, let thy will and not mine be done.

Is it thy will, oh my God, that my soul should separate itself from my body, and do penance in purgatory? I am contented. Dost Thou desire that it should remain in this body to suffer extreme pains and afflictions? If such is thy divine will, I also desire it, and submit without a murmur. Let thy will, not mine, be done.

"*Give us this day our daily bread.*"

6TH POINT. Happy are those who will eat bread in the kingdom of God. I thank Thee, most charitable Father, for having given me nourishment of body and soul so many years, and, above all, for having fed me with the bread of angels, which is the precious body of thy Son Jesus. Oh bread of life! I no longer fear death, since I have received Thee before dying. I dread not my enemies, fortified as I am by thy divine presence. I will walk in the strength of this bread unto Mount Horeb, where I shall see God.

What Thou hast promised and sworn is eternal truth, that he who eats of thy body, and drinks of thy blood, shall live eternally. It is this promise that dissipates my fears and sustains my hopes; since we have been united so intimately in this life, Thou wilt not suffer us to be separated in the next.

Oh Jesus, give me thy bread this day! Strengthen me by thy grace to make this journey into eternity. Without this life-giving bread I should fall into distrust, and never arrive at heaven.

"*Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.*"

7TH POINT. Lord, the multitude of my sins is innumerable. If Thou holdest me to a strict account of them I am lost. I can no longer pray, nor fast, nor do penance: what shall I then do to appease thy justice and secure my salvation?

Thou hast promised to forgive those who forgive, and to show mercy to those who exercise it.

Oh my God, I pardon all those who have offended me, and beseech Thee not to impute to them the evil they have done me. I ask this grace for them and offer Thee my death, united to that of thy divine Son, to expiate their sins.

"*And lead us not into temptation.*"

8TH POINT. It is now, oh my God, that I have need of thy protection and assistance, for, behold, my enemies surround me on

every side. Behold the devil, who cometh from hell, like a roaring lion, to devour me; but since Thou, my God, art with me, I will not be afraid. When I walk in the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, because Thou art with me.

Rise, then, God of hosts, come quickly to my deliverance. Send St. Michael, with his angels, to defend me. Thou knowest my weakness, oh prevent Satan from destroying me; suffer him not to tempt me, at least do not let me yield to temptation.

"But deliver us from evil."

9TH POINT. Deliver me from that of the body, which I have merited; from that of the soul, with which I am threatened. Deliver me from hell, which is the greatest of all evils. I accept all the pangs that I feel, and am ready to go whithersoever Thou desirest me; but, oh God of mercy, I conjure Thee, by the passion and death of thy Son, not to send me to hell! How could I spend an eternity without loving and praising Thee? Bring me to Thee in heaven, where, with the glorious company of the redeemed, I can praise Thee forever and ever. Amen.

FIFTEENTH SATURDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Paraphrase.

ON THE SALVE REGINA TO IMPLORE THE ASSISTANCE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN, TO WHOM HER SON HAS GIVEN US.

Salve Regina, mater misericordiæ.

1ST POINT. Hail to thee, queen of heaven and earth, of angels and men, of the living and the dead! Hail to thee, mother of mercy and of the miserable! as mother of grace, thou art mother of the just; as mother of mercy, thou art the mother of sinners. It is this which gives me confidence to address thee, and makes me hope that thou wilt be attentive to my prayer. If thou wert the mother of justice, I should fear thee, but what have I to fear from a mother of mercy? or, rather, for what ought I not to hope? The Church has given thee this beautiful name, because thou dost open the abyss of divine mercy, and obtainest therefrom all that thou desirest, and in the manner thou wilt; so that there is no sinner, however criminal he may be, who will perish, if thou deignest to pray for him, says St. Bernard.

2D POINT. Hail to thee, then, our life, our sweetness, and our

hope. Since thou art the mother of God, it is necessary for thee to be the mother of men; for having given life to a God, thou hast given it to all mankind. Thou art our mother, thou didst conceive us with thy Son at Nazareth, and gave us life at the foot of the cross. We are thy children, because thou hast procured for us a life of grace, and adopted us on Calvary in the person of St. John.

Thou art the mother of sweetness and not of severity. We have in God a Father of mercy, but it is still necessary that we should have a mother of mercy. It is to thee, oh holy Virgin, that this quality is due, and in thee that it is accomplished. After having borne for nine months, MERCY itself in thy chaste womb, can any one doubt that thy whole being is not penetrated with mercy?

Behold, then, what gives us courage and inspires us with confidence, and that which makes us call thee, with the Church, our best hope after thy Son.

Ad te clamamus exules filii Evæ.

3D POINT. We, the banished children of Eve, cry out unto thee. She lost us by the sin which banished her from paradise, and, by a strange miracle, gave us death before we had life. But God chose thee to repair the injury inflicted on us by this cruel mother. Thou healest those whom she has wounded, and savest those who are lost.

It is for this that we cry unto thee, and sigh, groan, and weep in this valley of tears, where we are charged with sins and weighed down with miseries; where we are separated from God, surrounded by devils, banished from our dear country, and always in danger of perishing.

Eia ergo advocata nostra.

4TH POINT. Come, then, our advocate, and look upon us with those thy pitying eyes; we have an advocate with the Father in the person of thy Son Jesus Christ, but we need also an advocate with Him, for He is our Judge.* It is for this that God has chosen thee, and transported thee from earth to heaven, to the end that thou mayest intercede confidently for us with Him.

Cast on me, then, the eyes of thy tender compassion, for thou canst not see any thing more poor, miserable, and needy.† If thou dost look on me with a favorable eye, I shall be saved; if thou dost turn thy eyes on me, I feel that my salvation is secure,

* St. Bernard. † St. Anslem.

for where is the sinner who can say that thou hast despised him when he invoked thee. Oh, holy and compassionate Virgin, assist me in my last sickness.

Et Jesum benedictum, &c.

5TH POINT. And after this our banishment, show us Jesus, the blessed fruit of thy womb! Thou art blessed among women, having clothed the Son of God with thy flesh, and it is through thee that I hope to see Him clothed in glory. *O clemens!* O mother of goodness! *O pia!* O mother of piety! *O dulcis Virgo Maria!* O mother of sweetness, holy Virgin Mary!

She revealed to a certain saint, (as some authors tell us,) that when any one repeats these words: *Eia ergo advocata nostra*, etc., she regards him with a favorable eye, and gives him her blessing.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE GOSPEL. *St. Luke*, xiv. 1–11.

"At that time, when Jesus went into the house of one of the chief of the Pharisees, on the Sabbath day, to eat bread, they watched Him. And, behold, there was a certain man before Him that had the dropsy. And Jesus, answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying: Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day? But they held their peace. But He, taking him, healed him, and sent him away. And answering them, He said: Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fall into a pit, and will not immediately draw him out on the Sabbath day? And they could not answer Him to these things. And He spoke a parable, also, to them that were invited, marking how they chose the first seats at the table, saying to them: When thou art invited to a wedding, sit not down in the first place, lest, perhaps, one more honorable than thou be invited by him; and he that invited thee and him, come and say to thee: Give this man place: and then thou begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when thou art invited, go sit down in the lowest place; that when he who invited thee cometh, he may say to thee: Friend, go up higher. Then shalt thou have glory before them that sit at table with thee. Because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Meditation.

ON THE GOSPEL.

1st Point. Jesus Christ went into the house of one of his greatest enemies to take his repast, and to make use of the occasion to do good to him, and all who were with him. They observed closely all his words and actions, not to profit by them, but to cry them down. The spiritual man has no eyes, except for his own faults, and to imitate the virtues of Jesus. Observe Him imitate his actions. Behold how Jesus prays, how He walks, how He eats, how He labors, how He suffers, and how He converses! Imitate his piety in prayer; his gravity in walking, his modesty in eating, his humility in conversing, his sweetness in forgiving injuries, his patience in suffering, and his obedience in dying. Keep your eyes always fixed on this divine example, and never turn from it.

2d Point. Dropsy is a figure of avarice, of cupidity and self love. The world is full of people with this disease, although there are but few who believe they have it. The symptoms of this malady are swelling and thirst. You have a large, proud, and arrogant heart; you are inflated with pride; you have an insatiable thirst for the good esteem of the world, earthly possessions, and the pleasures of sensuality. Oh, what incessant desires continu ally disturb your heart! What care and inquietude fill your spirit! Surely you are laboring under this disease.

3d Point. And you, religious souls, are you not also? You have a thirst for perfection which consumes you. If there is any mixture of inquietude, sadness, and, what is worse, jealousy, in your aspirations after perfection, rest assured that you are spiritually dropsical, and require a remedy. A soul which is full of God desires nothing more; and those who desire any other thing show that they are not filled with Him. Oh, my God, what is there in heaven, and besides Thee what do I desire on earth, if not Thee, the God of my salvation!

SIXTEENTH MONDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. "*When you are invited to a feast, sit not down in the first place.*" There are two feasts to which we are invited, that of heaven and that of earth. That of heaven consists in the union of our souls with God; that of earth in the union of our bodies with Jesus Christ in the Holy Sacrament. Christian soul, you are invited to both these feasts. It is permitted to you to aspire to the first place at the heavenly feast, but not to those of the earthly feast. It is necessary to choose the lowest place, when you approach the holy table. I mean to say, that it is necessary to humble yourself, to esteem yourself the least among men, the greatest of all sinners, and the most unworthy of all Christians, to participate worthily in these divine mysteries. If you take the lowest place, He who has invited you will make you come up higher. Oh, blindness of men! All the world wish to ascend, but none to descend; all wish to elevate themselves, but none desire to abase themselves!

2d Point. Jesus cured the dropsical man by laying his hand on him. He could have effected the miracle without this, but He wished to show us that his sacred body, in the divine sacrament of the altar, has the virtue necessary to heal our maladies, spiritual and corporal. Oh, how often has He not touched your tongue and heart! Why is it, then, that your heart is proud, angry and impatient? Why is your tongue so prone to raillery and slander? Oh, it is because you do not desire to be cured. You wish to be a slave of the world, as well as a disciple of Jesus; and wish to have charity without renouncing cupidity.

3d Point. If your ox or your ass fall into a pit, you straightway draw it out. Your brother has fallen into mortal sin, and you have not charity enough to draw him from it! Behold your friends who have fallen into the flames of purgatory, and you put not forth your hand to deliver them! Oh hardness of the human heart! Is a soul that has been purchased by the blood of the Son of God, of less account than a beast, which we lose no time in rescuing from the pit into which it has fallen?

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Let your modesty be known to all men." *Philippians*, iv.

"Giving no offence to any one." 2 *Corinthians*, vi.

"Be ye also followers of me, as I also am of Christ." 1 *Corinthians*, xi.

"The eye of the covetous man is insatiable." *Ecclesiasticus*, xiv.

"Blessed are they who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb." *Apocalypse*, xix.

SIXTEENTH TUESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE VAIN JUDGMENTS OF MEN.

1st Point. The Jews observed our divine Lord, and judged ill of his actions. Will you always be a slave to the opinions of men? Will you never learn to despise their contempt and their judgments? When will you declare yourself for God? when renounce your ostentation, your love of luxury, and these vain and worldly adornments? when will you dissolve your connection with those companions whose influences are evil? when will you begin a life of devotion? when place yourself in that state which the law of God, and the character of a modest Christian, demands? When trample under foot human respect, and make open profession of a new and more regular life?

The world derides you, but do you not know that the world is the greatest enemy of God? that it is the tyrant of religion, and the persecutor of innocence? Did you not renounce its friendship at the baptismal font? why, then, do you fear to displease it? If you do not desire to renounce the friendship of the world, renounce the friendship of Jesus Christ, for "He," says St. James, "who is a friend of the world is at enmity with God."

2d Point. How base a thing it is, for one to render himself a slave to the opinions of men! what infidelity to abandon the side of Jesus Christ! what treachery to unite with his enemies! what impiety to be ashamed of his doctrine and example! Are you not one of those base, impious, treacherous and unfaithful souls?

If men deride you, it is a sign of your merit. I believe you worthy of blame, if you have the approbation of those who approve only of those things which ought to be blamed. The judgments of men are not the rules of a Christian life? Is it necessary to be wise for fear of offending fools? What right have the impious to lay down laws for you, or prescribe rules for your adop-

tion? Who or what has made you their subject? What! afraid of being defamed by the infamous, and dishonored by men without honor!

3d Point. The wicked condemn you! A sentence is null which is pronounced without authority. It is unjust, when he who condemns is himself more worthy of condemnation. Is it to be wondered at, that a man who does no good, should speak evil? If the evil tongue of the impious accuse you, let your good works answer them. The contempt of the wicked is the eulogy of the good.

Oh, Jesus my Lord! Thou hast but few disciples in the world; but few servants who love and serve Thee. I see every day the tyrants of virtue, but the number of martyrs is few. Only this simple expression: *What will they say?* makes more apostates than did Nero, or Dioclesian. Alas! how will they who cannot endure the lashes of the tongue suffer the stripes of the whipcord? How will you be able to be a martyr of faith, if you do not wish to be one of charity? Is it not necessary to die for charity as well as for faith?

As for me, O my God and my Saviour, I will never blush at thy Gospel; I will declare my faith openly; I will never desire to please those who displease Thee, or be disquieted when I displease those who offend Thee. On the contrary, I will make it my greatest honor to be despised by those who despise Thee, and a singular pleasure to be hated by those who love Thee not; remembering the words of St. Jerome, who declares: that the chief virtue of a Christian is to despise and to be despised; to despise the world, and be despised by the world.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Be not thou, therefore, ashamed of the testimony of our Lord." 2 *Timothy*, i.

"If I did yet please men, I should not be the servant of Christ." *Galatians*, i.

"But as to me, it is a thing of the least account to be judged by you, or by human judgment." 1 *Corinthians*, iv.

"Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do." *Luke*, xii.

SIXTEENTH WEDNESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE PRIDE WHICH MAKES US DESIRE THE FIRST PLACE.

1st Point. How great a mercy is the humility of a God! how great a misery to man is pride! It is the source of all vices, as humility is the mother of all virtues. One is impatient because he is proud, and imagines that he does not merit chastisement; one indulges in anger through pride; one inordinately desires riches because he is proud; one is envious because he is proud; one is even impure because he is proud, for God humbles the spirit through the body. He abandons the proud to shameful passions; He covers with the nature of beasts those who wish to be gods like himself.

2d Point. Pride is the sin of the devil, and the first of all sins that was committed against God. Heaven was the place of its birth, hell that of its punishment. All other sins withdraw and fly from God, but pride makes war with God; it attacks Him, and desires his destruction. God regards it as his enemy. He gives his grace to the humble, but resists the proud. He humbles men corporally, He humbles them spiritually; He humbles them in time, and humbles them in eternity. Oh, what an infinite evil, that has God for its object of enmity!

3d Point. My God, do not abandon me to this detestable passion. I confess that I am puffed up with pride, and I detest it. Humility pleases me, but I hate humiliation. But withal, O Lord, I implore thy grace that I may know myself and know Thee; that I may know thy goodness and know my malice; know Thee to praise Thee, know myself to become humble.

Oh, new and precious life! wherein I find all that I desire; where I hope for all of which I am now ignorant; where I enjoy all that I love. I am at rest in my nothingness, for therein is my place. I am disturbed and agitated when I am out of it, because it is my centre. Oh my God, my all! when shall I be emptied of all that I am? when shall I be filled with all that Thou art?

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Every proud man is an abomination to the Lord." *Proverbs*, xvi.

"The Lord God hath sworn by his own soul, saith the Lord, the God of hosts: I detest the pride of Jacob." *Amos*, vi.

"Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled: and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." *St. Luke*, xiv.

"Amen I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." *St. Matt.* xviii.

"God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." *St. James*, iv.

SIXTEENTH THURSDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON A KNOWLEDGE OF GOD AND OF OURSELVES.

1st Point. Who art Thou, O my God, and who am I? Thou art all, and I am nothing; Thou knowest all, and I am without knowledge; Thou canst do all, and I can do nothing; Thou art only light, and I am only darkness; Thou art only sanctity, and I am only malice; Thou art only strength, and I am only weakness; Thou art the Holy of Holies, and I am the chief of sinners; Thou art the King of kings, and I am the slave of slaves; Thou art the source of all my good, and the remedy of all my evils. On Thee alone I depend for counsel and help. Thou art my only consolation. Thou art my life, my joy, my wisdom, my strength, my virtue, my desire, and my only hope!

2d Point. What are you, O proud man? What have you that you have not received from God? And if you have received all from Him, how dare you elevate yourself above others? Can you of yourself have a good thought, conceive a good desire, say a good word, or perform a good action?

Ah, then, why have you not recourse to God? Why do you not supplicate Him to instruct, strengthen and defend you? Why not humble yourself in his presence? Why reckon only on your intellect, your credit, your friends, your virtue, and your merit, as if you could elude God, and act independently of Him?

3d Point. What are you, vain and haughty spirit? You are a being whom God has placed in this world to glorify Him. You are a sinner, who have a thousand times deserved hell; a Christian who ought to be crucified; a person destined for eternal glory, who ought to suffer much to merit it. Ah! why, then, do you think and work only to glorify yourself instead of God? Why shrink from penance in this life, when, if you had your just deserts, you would be now doing it in hell? Why, erring Chris-

tian, do you hate the cross, and murmur when God afflicts you? Why wish to journey to heaven by another road than that of the saints?

4TH POINT. What are you, proud and ungrateful one? What are you in your life? what will you be in your death? You have been like a beast from your birth, without stability or reason. There is no sin that you have not committed. You have been a perfidious and ungrateful wretch during your life, and will be, perhaps, a reprobate at death, and be precipitated into hell. Why do you value yourself more than others who are better than you? Why despise your neighbor? Why plume your vanity on advantages which you do not possess? or, if you have them, why forget that He who gave them can take them away? and of which you will inevitably have to render Him a strict account after death in judgment.

Oh man without reason! oh sinner without law! oh Christian without faith! do you prefer to imitate the pride of Lucifer to the humility of Jesus? What distinguishes you from your neighbor if it is not your sins, which far exceed his? You know that all good comes from God, and yet you refuse to glorify Him; you know that sin and ignorance are your only possessions, and still you do not humble yourself before Him. If you exalt yourself, you shall be humbled, and if you humble yourself, you shall be exalted.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Humble thy spirit very much: for the vengeance on the flesh of the ungodly is fire and worms." *Ecclesiasticus*, vii.

"Come to me, all you that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. Take up my yoke upon you, and learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart: and you shall find rest to your souls." *St. Matt.* xi.

"And whosoever will be first among you, shall be the servant of all." *St. Mark*, x.

"Because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled. and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." *St. Luke*, xiv.

SIXTEENTH FRIDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON HUMILITY.

1st Point. If you possess and practise every virtue, and have not humility, they will not save you. All your vices and sins, if you are humbly penitent, cannot damn you, for humility banishes sin from the heart, and makes every virtue enter therein. Were you as wicked as king Achab, and were to humble yourself as he did, you would like him, obtain mercy. God resists the proud and giveth his grace to the humble. What can you do without grace? You must humble yourself to obtain it. It will not be granted to the proud unless they pray and humble themselves.

2d Point. Who will say that it is impossible to save themselves, since it is only necessary to humiliate one's self to obtain from God all that one desires? Who can say that the road to heaven is rough and difficult, since it is only necessary to abase one's self to ascend it? Every one cannot elevate himself, but who cannot lower himself? Every one cannot ascend, but who cannot descend?

3d Point. I can accomplish all things if I humiliate myself; I cannot fast, but I can humiliate myself; I cannot shed tears of sorrow for my sins, but I can humiliate myself for those for which I have no tears; I cannot give alms or say many prayers, but I can humiliate myself at all times, in spirit and in mind; I can do all with humility, and without it I can do nothing. The virtue of humility repairs the defects of charity. A sinner is safe when reposing in the arms of humility. God never despises an humble and contrite heart.

Oh my soul, why do we lose courage? why despair of the mercy of God? why abandon ourselves to vexation, and consume ourselves with sadness? We have only to humble ourselves before God and we shall obtain all that we have not, and receive all that we do not merit. You often fall into sin. Be patient, but above all humiliate yourself. You do not know how to pray, and are always distracted; never mind, live in prayer, and all that i left for you to do, is to humiliate yourself. You have great weaknesses, and are subject to many considerable defects. If you can do nothing else, humiliate yourself; the virtue of humility repairs the breaches and heals the wounds that are inflicted by sin on charity.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"He hath had regard to the prayer of the humble: and He hath not despised their petition." *Psalm* ci.

"For gold and silver are tried in the fire, but acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation." *Ecclesiasticus*, ii.

"The greater thou art, the more humble thyself in all things; and thou shalt find grace before God." *Ecclesiasticus*, iii.

"For great is the power of God alone: and He is honored by the humble." *Ibid.*

SIXTEENTH SATURDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE PRACTICE OF HUMILITY.

1st Point. It is necessary to suffer contempt, to despise contempt, to love contempt, to desire contempt, and to seek contempt. To suffer it, because it is an evil; to despise it, because it is an imaginary evil; to love it, because it affords an opportunity of great merit; to desire it, because it is salutary for the soul's good; to seek it, because it is an inestimable good, and one which is necessary for us.

2d Point. Let us conceal our treasures in the bosom of humility, for fear that the enemy of our souls may rob us of them. Nature reserves for herself that which is good, and rejects whatever is bad. Conceal, then, your virtues, and confess and reject your sins. It is dangerous to speak of one's self either good or bad. If men speak well of themselves, it is to appear holy; if ill, it is to appear humble.

3d Point. It is necessary to consider those defects innocent which cause us confusion. It is necessary to love, generally, all that keeps us in contempt and abjection. Our centre of life is baseness and nothingness. It is here that we must live; here that we must repose. To be pious, and make a display of it, is a dangerous state; to be not pious, and yet appear so, is a detestable hypocrisy; to be truly pious, and not parade it before the world, is the state and characteristic of a saint.

What is your opinion of yourself? what sentiments do you entertain of others? do you love to be seen of men? do you speak well of yourself? do you speak ill of others? do you seek the grandeur and applause of the world? do you fly contempt? have

you a horror of confusion? do you plume yourself on the praises that you receive? do you envy your equals? are you proud, passionate, and hasty? do you give yourself trouble about your defects and imperfections? are you afraid of human respect? If so, you are base, haughty, ambitious, and vain, and possess the spirit of Lucifer, and not that of Christ.

Oh, Jesus my Lord! how is it that I fly from and hate humiliation, when I know that without humiliation I cannot acquire humility.

Give me grace to love contempt, at least to suffer it with patience, to the end that I may possess Thee in heaven, into which I shall never enter if I am not humble.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Why doth thy spirit swell against God?" *Job*, xv.

"Amen I say unto you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." *St. Matt.* xviii.

"Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." *Ibid.*

"Be you humbled, therefore, under the mighty hand of God; that He may exalt you in the time of visitation." 1 *Peter*, v.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE GOSPEL. *Matt.* xxii. 35–46.

"At that time, the Pharisees came to Jesus: and one of them, a doctor of the law, asked Him, tempting Him: Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said to him: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind.* This is the greatest and first commandment. And the second is like to this: *Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.* On these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets. And the Pharisees being gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying: What think you of Christ? whose son is He? They say to Him: David's. He saith to them: How, then, doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying: *The Lord said to my Lord, sit on my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footstool?* If David, then, calls Him Lord, how is He his son? And no man was able to answer Him

a word; neither durst any man, from that day forth, ask Him any more questions."

Meditation.

ON THE GOSPEL.

1st Point. The Jews questioned Jesus Christ; some, through malice, to tempt Him and ensnare Him in his speech; others through curiosity, and others through a sincere desire to learn their duty in the way of salvation. Jesus replied to them all with an admirable sweetness and charity; He concealed the malice of the first, excused the curiosity of the second and charitably instructed the last. Do you act thus towards your neighbor? do you conceal his faults? do you excuse his weakness? soothe his misery? give him good advice? do you treat him with sweetness? do you endeavor to reclaim and bring him back to the good road when you see him wandering astray?

2d Point. There are Christians who incessantly interrogate our Lord. Some, who desire to know his will, question Him, saying with St. Paul: "*Lord, what wouldst Thou have me to do?*" This is a proper and excellent mode of interrogating Him. Others demand an explanation of his designs, and a reason for the government that He exercises over them; such questions are insolent and criminal. Others ask nothing of God; it may be through negligence of their perfection and salvation; it may be because they imagine they know all, and have need of nothing more; or it may be because they depend on his Providence, and wish to give themselves no trouble about their accountability to their Supreme Judge. The first are persons of holy and perfect dispositions; the second are proud and puffed up; and the third are stupid and insensate. To which of these classes do you belong? Are you one of those who desire to know all and do nothing? or of those who prefer ignorance, that they may remain idle? or of those who wish to know all, in order to do all? Do you understand the science of the saints? do you study it? When you shall have done all that you know, God will teach you those things in which you are deficient. To wish to know all, and to do nothing, is to amass fuel for the flames of hell.

3d Point. "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind.*" With all your mind, submitting to Him your will; with all your soul, immolating to Him your passions; with all your strength, consecrating to Him your actions and all your powers. With all your

mind, believing all that He has revealed to you; with all your heart, doing all that He has commanded you; with all your soul, seeking only for that which is well pleasing to Him. With all your strength, fleeing and repelling all that is offensive to Him; with all your mind, thinking only of Him; with all your heart, desiring only Him; with all your soul, existing only for Him; with all your strength, in working only for Him. Is it thus that you love Him? Subject to Him your mind by faith, your heart by charity, your passions by mortification, your strength by humility and patience.

4TH POINT. "*This is the first and greatest commandment.*" It is the first in obligation, because it ought to be preferred before all; and for it, it may be necessary to renounce honors, goods, friends, pleasures, and even life. It is the first in authority, because it refers immediately to God, and is intimately associated with Him. It is the first in dignity, because it is the foundation of all others, and the height of perfection. It is the first necessarily, because without it all other virtues are sterile and unfruitful. It is the first in merit, because without charity the practice of every good work will not merit heaven. It is the first in sweetness, because charity renders the yoke of Jesus infinitely sweet and agreeable, filling the soul with joy, and the peace and unction of the Holy Ghost. It is the first in efficacy, because it involves and accomplishes all the rest, for he who loves God can do nothing to displease Him. If you are not afraid of offending God, be assured that you are devoid of charity.

Oh my God! this consideration amazes me! Alas! if I am without charity, I am nothing; I am thy enemy; I am a reprobate. Being without the love of God, how can I be otherwise than miserable? Touch my heart, oh my God, with thy grace, and inflame my soul with charity.*

SEVENTEENTH MONDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1ST POINT. "*Jesus added: And the first is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*" He pronounced the second commandment like unto the first, because it proceeds from the

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

same charity which makes us love God, and it is the same virtue which makes us love each other. You cannot perfectly love your neighbor unless you love God, or perfectly love God unless you love your neighbor. Since God himself commands you to love him, who is formed after his own image, purchased with his blood, and destined to the same glory as yourself, how can you, Christian soul, evade the obligation? As much, then, as you love God, so much ought you to love your neighbor; since the love of one is measured by the other, and it is the same charity which embraces both.

2d Point. Do you love God? If you do not, you are the most ungrateful, unjust, and unfaithful of all creatures; since He has so often pardoned your sins, and so long borne with your derelictions. Do you love God? Ah, whom will you love if not this glorious being whose perfections are infinite, whose charity is illimitable? Do you love God? Your lips answer in the affirmative, but I fear your heart does not respond to your words. If you love God, you will also love your neighbor. Pause here and reflect whether or no you desire all good for him; judge favorably of him in all things, excuse his defects, support his weakness, bear with his ill humors, rejoice at his prosperity as at your own, and pardon him willingly the injuries he may have done, or continue to do you? If this is the case, you love him in truth; if not, then, indeed, you do not love him; neither do you love God, but violate the first and greatest commandment.

3d Point. You say that you love God! but how do you love Him? Is it with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your strength, and with all your soul? Do you love Him without coldness, without fickleness, without dissimulation? Do you love Him sweetly, love Him wisely, with strength and constancy? Sweetly, against the snares of the devil; wisely, against the artifices of the devil; strongly, against the contempt of the world; constantly, against the fickleness of our nature? "If," says St Augustine, "an idol had a heart, it would love the one that made it." How do you intend to dispose of your heart? Who deserves it, or has a right to it, if not He who formed it with His hands, purchased it with his blood, sanctified it by his grace, and animated it with his spirit? And notwithstanding all this, you love Him not, or love Him only in appearance, or only in part, or only for a season, or when He bestows some signal blessing on you; or it may be that your love is governed by humor or caprice? Do you presume, therefore, to call yourself one of those who love God? "*Be astonished, oh ye heavens! My people have commit-*

ted two evils; they have forsaken me, I who am the source of living waters, to drink from broken cisterns which hold no water."

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy, and should know all mysteries, and all knowledge; and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." 1 *Corinthians*, xiii.

"God is charity: and he that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him." 1 *John*, iv.

"If we love one another, God abideth in us, and his charity is perfected in us." *Ibid.*

"I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength." *Psalm* xvii.

"Simon son of John, lovest thou me more than these? Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." *St. John*, xxi.

SEVENTEENTH TUESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE LOVE THAT WE OUGHT TO BEAR TO OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

1st Point. All the law is included in the love of God and our neighbor. If I love Jesus Christ I have fulfilled all the law, for in loving Him I love a God, and, through his sacred humanity, a man, through whom each one of his creatures becomes my neighbor. This is the point of the parable of the good Samaritan. It is, then, necessary to love Jesus Christ. Let us see if this demand on our love is not a reasonable one.

Jesus is the most beautiful of all men, the greatest of all kings, the most charitable of all fathers, the most faithful of all friends, the sweetest of all masters, the most perfect of all spouses, and the most vigilant and indefatigable of all shepherds. It is He who watches over my ways, who governs me by his wisdom, protects me by his power, sanctifies me by his goodness; it is He who leads me into rich pastures, where I find every good in abundance: and He who causes to spring forth in my heart fountains of living waters to quench my thirst; it is He who heals me when I am

sick, defends me when I am attacked, consoles me when I am afflicted, and seeks for me and brings me back when I wander astray.

2d Point. Jesus descended from heaven for me; made himself mortal and passible man for me; became a poor miserable child for me; labored thirty-three years for me; suffered every variety of injury, contempt, persecution, and torment for me; and finally shed his blood and gave his life for me. He would suffer and die again for me, if it were necessary; He watches, without ceasing, over me; He has given his angels charge over me, to follow, instruct, defend, console and guard me.

3d Point. Jesus loves me with all his heart. He ever waits at the door of my heart, wherein He desires to enter, that He may render it happy by uniting it with his own; He has prayed and conjured me to give Him my heart; He has shed his blood, and given his life to gain it. Am I not, then, the most unjust and ungrateful of all creatures, if I refuse Him the possession thereof, or give Him only a divided heart? How can I refuse to love a father so good, a king so great, a shepherd so charitable, a friend so faithful, a master so clement, and a spouse so perfect and beautiful?

Alas! I do not love Him, for I fail to keep his commandments. I offend and wound my neighbor, which is of all things most sensibly felt by Him; I do not meditate on Him; I do nothing for Him; I cannot remain an hour in his company without distraction and weariness; I even take part with his enemies; I prefer the service of the devil to his; if I love Him at all, it is with coldness, with treachery, with a divided heart, and only in appearance; I love Him with my lips only, while my heart is far away from Him and his interests.

Oh Love above all other loves! oh Heart of all hearts! grant me grace to love Thee as much as Thou lovest me; to love Thee as Thou dost merit to be loved! Anathema to him who loves not our Lord Jesus Christ.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Thou art beautiful above the sons of men." *Psalm* xliv.

"Christ is all in all." *Colossians*, iii.

"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." *St. John*, xiv.

"If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha." 1 *Corinthians*, xvi.

SEVENTEENTH WEDNESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

HOW WE OUGHT TO LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR.

1st Point. We ought to love our neighbor as God himself loves him. This is what the example of Jesus Christ proposes to us. Even as the three persons of the Holy Trinity are one God, one in essence, in nature, in judgment, and in will, so all Christians ought to be of one spirit. And as the three divine persons are one in wisdom, in power, and in goodness, and what one does *ad extra* is done by all; so Christians ought to have but one heart, one judgment, and one will, and ought to participate in each other's sufferings, and act in concert, remembering that it is only one spirit that animates the body and members of the Church. Is it thus that you love your neighbor?

2d Point. The charity that we have for our brethren ought to illustrate the adorable union of the divine Word with the holy humanity of our Saviour Jesus Christ. This is so intimate, that of two natures He made himself one person; which union established between God and man a community of good and of evil. For the man truly became God, and may be rightly called immortal, all-powerful, and impassible, though He is of his own nature. created in time, infirm, passible, and mortal. God also became truly man, and, in virtue of this union, was born in time, feeble, miserable, passible, and mortal. Behold the example of Christian charity that the Son of God himself proposes to you, and which was exemplified in the primitive Church, when Christians had but one mind and heart, and possessed all things in common, and where the good of one was the good of all. Is it thus that you are united to your neighbor?

3d Point. The third example of Christian charity is the love that God bears to man; for our love is a participation of his, or, rather, it is his love itself, for he loves all things through his Holy Spirit, which He has given us. And God loves all men without exception of persons. He desires for them the highest good; He bestows blessings equally on all, and in all places, and heaps benefits even on his greatest enemies, without any merit on their part, but through the plenitude of his own pure goodness. Consider this model, and see if, up to the present time, you have imitated your divine model.

4th Point. The fourth example of charity is the love that Jesus

Christ bears us. You know what He has suffered for you. Was He obliged to suffer thus? He died for all men without exception; He imparted to them his grace, and made them partakers of his merits; bequeathed freely, and to all, his treasures, which are the divine sacraments, whereby they may enrich themselves; and, notwithstanding all the injuries they do Him, He is always ready to receive them into his grace and favor again. What injuries have you done Him since you came to the use of reason? how often has He pardoned you? how patiently has he borne with you! What ought you not to do for Him? He has substituted your neighbor in his place; all that you do to Him, be it good or evil, He considers as done to himself.*

SEVENTEENTH THURSDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ANOTHER MODEL FOR THE LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOR.

1st Point. The fifth model is the love we have for *ourselves*—a love which makes us prefer ourselves, and procure for ourselves every possible good, excuse our faults, turn away from ourselves a threatened evil, strengthen our weakness, and readily pardon all things in ourselves. It is thus that God wishes us to love our neighbor. "Love him," He says, "as yourself. Do unto others that which you would have them do unto you." Is not this just and reasonable? But do you act thus?

2d Point. We ought to love each other as the blessed do in heaven; for grace is the seed of glory, and our reward is measured by the extent of our charity. As the blessed then, have but one heart and one soul, and as all their treasures in the heavenly kingdom are in common, they have among them neither quarrels, disputes, ambition, nor jealousy, but that which makes the happiness of one, constitutes the happiness of all, in peace and an eternal union. Thus, we ought to make the happiness of our neighbor our happiness; his pleasure, our pleasure; his glory, our glory. We ought to enter into all his interests, preserve peace inviolably with him, and never offend or be offended with him, whatever subject or cause we may have for offence.

3d Point. The last model of Christian charity is the union be-

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

tween the members of the body. It is St. Paul who proposes this example to Christians, who are members of the mystical body of Jesus Christ, which is his church. There is nothing more dissimilar than the several members of the body; one warm, the other cold; one moist, the other dry; one hard, the other soft; one strong, the other weak; one honored, the other despised; one always working, the other at rest. And, notwithstanding this, there is no schism between them, nor separation, nor jealousy, but, on the contrary, there is union and a wonderful sympathy. If one receives good, the others rejoice. If one suffers evil, all suffer with it. The head, which of all the members is the most noble and elevated, stoops to extract a thorn which wounds the foot. In a word, all good and every ill are in common among them, and all work together in harmonious union for the good and defence of the whole. Oh admirable union! oh wonderful charity! oh perfect model of Christian charity!

4TH POINT. Is it thus that you love your neighbor? Do you rejoice in his prosperity? Are you afflicted at the evil that befalls him? Do you excuse and support his weakness? Do you assist him in his necessities? Are you ready to die for him? Alas! how will you give your life for him, when you are unwilling to bestow your goods on him. You are a proud and envious person; you covet the possessions of others, and will take them if an opportunity occurs for you to do so; you wound the reputation of your neighbor by slanders; you are jealous of his honors and his prosperity; so far from doing him good, your only desire is to do him evil. Ah, can you say, after this, that you love Jesus? Can you approach that holy communion, which is a sacrament of union? How will you reply to our Lord in the day of judgment, when He will reproach you with having despised, hated, and made a mockery of Him; with having made Him the subject of your jests, your railleries, your calumnies and slanders; with having maltreated Him in word and deed, and abandoned Him in his miseries. Question yourself, and consider how you would reply, how defend yourself, and whither would you fly to hide yourself from the wrath of your judge.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"For what shall I do when God shall rise to judge? And when He shall examine, what shall I answer Him?" *Job*, xxxi.

"Bear ye one another's burdens; and so shall you fulfil the law of Christ." *Galatians*, vi.

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." *St. Matt.* xxii.

"By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." *St. John*, xiii.

"These things I command you, that you love one another." *St. John*, xv.

"Holy Father, keep them in thy name, whom Thou hast given me: that they may be one, as we also *are*." *St. John*, xvii.

SEVENTEENTH FRIDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

CONCERNING THE PROPERTIES OF A LOVE FOR ONE'S NEIGHBOR, AND THE DEFECTS WHICH ARE CONTRARY TO IT.

1st Point. "Charity," says St. Paul, "is patient." She is not vindictive or resentful against her neighbor for any ill treatment that she may receive from him; she bears with his vices and imperfections with sweetness, and excuses them as much as possible; if any one says any thing to offend her, she seems not to hear it; she returns neither railing for railing, nor injury for injury, but suffers all without a word, without complaint, without revenge, and without showing any mark of resentment.

Charity is sweet to all the world; she does good to those who do her evil, and ranks among her best friends those who cause her the most pain. She offends no one, either by word or action, and if she happens to wound, or excite the anger of a neighbor, she asks his pardon, and expresses much sorrow for having offended him.

2d Point. Charity is prompt to do good unto others; she flies to relieve the necessities of her neighbor, serves him with joy, studies his interests, alleviates his cares, and takes extreme pleasure in serving him, regarding, in his person, Jesus Christ; she does not consult her own convenience in serving others.

Charity is not imprudent, rash or audacious, but humble, modest and respectful; she is honored by all men, even by those who do not practise her sacred laws; her conversation is honest without affectation, sincere without dissimulation, sweet without sharpness, free without frivolity, and engaging without artifice; she makes a mockery of none, hates slander, buffoonery and wit which wounds her neighbor; she always puts herself in the place of others, and questions herself thus: "How should I feel were they to speak thus of me, or amuse themselves at my expense?"

Charity is not haughty or proud. She does not elevate herself above others, or seek the praises of the world; she is not wounded when she sees that others are more loved and honored than herself; she is humble and regards every one as her superior; she salutes them with respect, and honors them by offering them the best places. She is willing to render them the most humble services, and that, from her heart, with a tender and generous affection, regarding in them the person of Jesus Christ.

3d Point. Charity is not artificial or dissimulating, but simple and candid; she is prudent in her language, but never deceives any one; she hates lying and deceit, and always speaks as she thinks; her air is simple and modest, and though she may be civil, she never flatters. Insinuations, defiances, and rash judgments she regards as deadly poisons, of which she has infinite horror. She acts with simplicity, speaks with sweetness, entertains a kind opinion of all, and judges ill of none.*

SEVENTEENTH SATURDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

CONCERNING OTHER PROPERTIES OF THIS LOVE FOR OUR NEIGHBOR.

1st Point. Charity loves mortification as the principle of her life, for she loves peace which can only be preserved by each one contributing to bear his part, by the mortification of his inclinations and passions, which are the cause of every disorder and evil in the world. She is not inordinately attached to the goods of this life, on the contrary, she willingly strips herself to clothe others, knowing that avarice is the devil which excites all the wars, divisions, injustices, troubles, and discords on earth.

2d Point. Charity is not hard and unpitying, but tender and sensible of the misery of her neighbor; she looks on him as the person of Jesus Christ. This is the reason why she delights in prisons and hospitals, where she finds the miserable whom she assists, consoles, and ministers unto. She does not envy the temporal or spiritual good of her neighbor, on the contrary, she promotes both as much as possible. She believes all, hopes for all, does all, suffers all, gives all, embraces all, submits to all. Behold the spirit of Christian charity!

3d Point. Christian soul, are you actuated by this spirit of

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

charity? do you illustrate her precepts in your life? Oh, great God! I fear not. Enter into yourself without delay, and see if you have one spark of charity. Do you love your neighbor as yourself? do you do unto him as you would he should do unto you? do you behave towards him in the manner that you would wish him to act towards you? Have you a good opinion of him? Do you love and honor him? do you desire him good? do you do him good? do you excuse his defects? do you bear them with patience? do you rejoice at his prosperity? do you pardon him when he offends you? do you ask pardon of him when you injure him? do you assist him in his corporal and spiritual necessities? do you speak well of him? do you say no evil of him? do you not rejoice when you see him mortified and humiliated?

Oh, miserable one that I am! how can I hope to be saved, when I have refused to love my neighbor, and have offended him in every way. Alas, my Lord, Thou hast only to question me at the day of judgment. My conscience will judge and condemn me. What shall I do? What will become of me? Can I be saved without charity? Impossible. I have not cherished up to the present time a spirit of charity; but I desire to do so from this moment. I wish to change my whole life, and be converted in spirit and in truth, that in the day of judgment, the Son of God may thank me for having served and assisted Him in the person of my neighbor.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Charity is patient, is kind: charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth: beareth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth." 1 *Corinthians*, xiii.

"Who art thou who judgest thy neighbor?" *St. James*, iv.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE GOSPEL. *St. Matthew*, ix. 1–8.

"AT that time, Jesus entering into a boat, He passed over the water, and came back into his own city. And, behold, they brought to Him one sick of the palsy, lying on a bed. And Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the man sick of the palsy: Be of good heart, son; thy sins are forgiven thee. And, behold, some of the

scribes said within themselves: He blasphemeth. And Jesus, seeing their thoughts, said: Why do you think evil in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee: or to say, Arise and walk? But, that you may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, then, said He to the man sick of the palsy: Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house. And he arose, and went into his house. And the multitudes seeing it, feared, and glorified God, that gave such power to man."

Meditation.

ON THE GOSPEL.

1st Point. Jesus having cured two men who were possessed, permitted the devils which He drove out of them, to enter into a herd of swine, which straightway cast themselves into the sea. The inhabitants of the place, on witnessing this, besought Him to depart from their coasts, which He did. Who does not feel astonished at the conduct of these miserable creatures, and at their request to the Son of God, to depart from them! Why did they drive from them Him who had come to save and deliver them from the dominion of the devil? It was because they were attached inordinately to their worldly possessions; they preferred losing God rather than their herds. Alas! for what can man hope after God has abandoned him?

How often, Christian soul, have you driven God away from your heart for the sake of a vile interest, a filthy pleasure, a dunghill of honor, or an imaginary enjoyment? How often, when He has spoken to you, and plead with you to change your life, have you replied insolently to Him, and bade Him depart from you, that you neither desired to know nor follow Him? You have driven Him from your heart: how do you know that He will ever return?

2d Point. Jesus having departed from this country, came into his own city, Capharnaum, where He was accustomed to reside. Our heart is the city of Jesus; He enters therein by communion, and remains by grace. Do you not close the gates against Him? Are you ready to receive Him? Oh happy soul! which will to-day receive such a guest—a King so powerful, so rich, so sweet, so liberal, and so desired of all nations! He never entered into a habitation without doing good, and leaving his benediction therein. Ah, what ought you not to hope for if you receive Him with faith, humility, and devotion!

3d Point. Jesus was in the city when they brought to Him a

man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed, and He cured him in consideration of the faith of those who presented him. Is not your soul paralyzed? From whom can it receive motion? Is it from God, or from the devil, or from nature? Do you labor with joy and fervor in all that relates to his service? Is it not by the operation of his Spirit that you speak, walk, and labor? Oh, you are base in the service of God; you are cold; you are all on fire when you work for your own interests, and languid and cold in the service of God. Surely your soul is paralyzed! Present it here to the Lord; implore Him to restore it to health; your prayer will be granted if you have faith; at least, then, ask others to present you, and after you are healed, do you in turn bring in also the paralyzed to this kind Physician. Alas! there are many in the world, and you can do nothing more agreeable to Jesus Christ, who will cure them in consideration of your faith and charity.*

EIGHTEENTH MONDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME GOSPEL.

1st Point. Jesus said to the sick man: "*Be of good heart, my son.*" These words are sweet, tender, and charitable. He called a miserable sinner his child! He excited his faith and hope, for without these nothing can be obtained from God. He pours the oil of his mercy only into those vessels which are prepared by confidence in Him. Why are you afraid to approach Jesus Christ? why do you communicate so seldom and with such difficulty? Listen to his words: "*My son, my daughter,*" He says, "*come unto me. I come not to destroy, but to save you. Let not your heart be troubled, for it is I, your Father, your Saviour, your Spouse, and your Physician! Go, your sins are all forgiven.*" If He gave his grace to this sick man, who did not ask it, He will without fail impart it to him who asks it, confiding in his goodness.

2d Point. The diseased man asked health, and not the pardon of his sins; but as sin is the cause of all our maladies, this wise Physician, to cure the evil, removes the cause. If you are sick, examine your life, and see if it is not your sins which have brought these infirmities on you and ruined your health. Confess that you richly merit what you are suffering; bear your ills with pa-

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

tience, and if you desire to be healed, purge your soul of its vices. Bodily suffering is often the result of spiritual suffering, and to relieve one you must cure the other.

3D POINT. The Scribes and Pharisees accused Jesus Christ of blasphemy, because He told the sick man that his sins were forgiven him; and He, seeing their thoughts, said: "*Why do you think evil in your hearts?*" Then to convince them that He was God, and had power on earth to forgive sins, He cured the diseased man. Oh, hatred is a great evil! oh, envy is a detestable passion! The priests and the Jews hated and envied Jesus! This is the reason they imputed evil to Him on all occasions, and misconstrued his words. Are you not possessed of this evil spirit? Are you not jealous of the prosperity of your neighbor? "*Why,*" said our Lord, "*do you think evil in your hearts?*" Why impute evil to your brother? Who has constituted you his judge? What right have you to condemn him?

Oh, Lord Jesus, far be it from me to judge others, since I am more guilty than they! I cannot see the heart of my neighbor, or penetrate his intention; I am not his superior; I have no authority over him. Thou alone art his judge, and hast assured us that to escape judgment, we must not judge others. When I judge my neighbor, let it be favorably; when I judge myself, let it be strictly, and without favor. I will not presume to usurp the place of God. I will always remember these words, "*judge not, and you shall not be judged.*" Condemn not, if you would escape condemnation.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Woe to them, for they have departed from me: they shall be wasted because they have transgressed against me." *Osee*, vii.

"Woe to them when I shall depart from them." *Osee*, ix.

"Heal me, O Lord, for my bones are troubled." *Psalm* vi.

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not." *St. John*, i.

"My son, in thy sickness neglect not thyself; but pray to the Lord, and He shall heal thee. Turn away from sin, and order thy hands aright, and cleanse thy heart from all offence." *Ecclesiasticus*, xxxviii.

EIGHTEENTH TUESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON LUKEWARMNESS REPRESENTED BY THE SICK MAN.

1st Point. A soul that is lukewarm is miserable. She has lost all relish for God; she is deprived of his consolations; she has gone astray from the ways of his Providence; she sins without fear or remorse; she dares not enter within herself; she is diseased and unconscious of being so; she is wicked and cannot discern her vices; she is a slave and believes herself at liberty; she rejects the inspirations of grace, and is insensible to the appeals of conscience; she dishonors virtue; she discredits devotion; she scandalizes her neighbor; she is a burden to the community; she grieves the Holy Ghost; afflicts the heart of God, and provokes Him to cast her forth from it; she obliges Him to thrust her away with violence, and when she is cast out, she can never hope to return, as that which is vomited up cannot be eaten again.

2d Point. Am I in this perilous state? am I fervent? am I lukewarm? am I all to God? Do I offer Him a divided heart? Has He not cast me forth from his? Is He not on the point of doing so? Oh, I am most unfaithful in the service of God! I am negligent in acquitting myself of my duties; I have distractions in praying; I often omit my prayers; I say them with much difficulty; they are wearisome to me; they profit me but little; I do no penance; I have a horror of mortification; I seek only my own pleasures; I am free in speaking; I do not keep silence; I treat myself tenderly; I do not desire to commit great sins, but have no scruple in committing lesser ones; I am no longer fervent.

3d Point. Oh, my divine Saviour! I have long afflicted Thee, and have hung like a burden on thy heart! Oh, I conjure Thee, do not cast me forth yet; do not withdraw thy Holy Spirit and the grace of thy protection from me. Exile me, if Thou desirest it, from every joy, but drive me not out of thy heart. Deprive me of all consolation, but not of thy grace and love. Ah, I am no longer lukewarm; for it seems to me that I fear thy hatred more than all the pains of hell; and I am resolved, with the help of thy grace, to work faithfully for my perfection.

My soul, remember the state from which you have been delivered, and renew your first fervor: if you do not, they will take away your candlestick and put another in its place. Jesus will drive you out of his heart, into which, perhaps, you will never be

allowed to enter again. Do penance, then, for the past; labor with more fervor for your perfection; renew your devotion, and be careful not to neglect it.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"I would thou wert hot or cold. But because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth." *Apocalypse*, iii.

"Be mindful, therefore, from whence thou art fallen: and do penance, and do the first works. Or else I come to thee, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place, unless thou shalt have done penance." *Apocalypse*, ii.

EIGHTEENTH WEDNESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

1st Point. It is good to hope in God. Hope is an excellent and admirable virtue. He who hopes in God, recognizes a First Cause, endowed with infinite perfections; he allows himself to be conducted by his wisdom; he leans on his power, confides in his goodness, abandons himself to his mercy, renders homage to his greatness, and depends on his Providence. Hope renders man god-like; it makes the weak powerful, the poor rich, and the miserable happy.

2d Point. Hope is never more necessary than when every thing encourages us to despair; it is never more necessary to abandon ourselves to God than when He seems to have abandoned us. God gives his divine subsistence to him who strips himself of his human subsistence; God gives his power to him who knows his own weakness; God gives his riches to him who knows his own poverty.

3d Point. Depend on no earthly support, and God will sustain you; have no human subsistence, and you shall have a divine; renounce your own light, and the wisdom of God will govern you; strip yourself of all your strength, and the power of God will bear you up; divest yourself of your own opinions, and the sanctity of God will fill you.

Oh, God all-powerful! what am I, and what art Thou? Thou art all, and I am nothing! Thou art strength, and I am weakness!

Thou art truth, and I am only a shadow! Thou art light, and I am darkness! Thou art holiness, and I am malice!

Oh, my God, my hope! I abandon myself to Thee; I lean and rest on Thee. Since, then, I have chosen Thee for my guide, if I lose my way, they will say that Thou art the cause of my wandering; since I lean wholly on Thee, if I fall they will say that Thou art the cause; since I have abandoned all my interests to Thee, if I am lost they will declare that Thou art the cause of my ruin. Can it be that Thou wilt abandon me? can it be that Thou wilt suffer me to go astray? can it be that Thou wilt betray me? Oh, my God, my Father! Thou canst not be unfaithful to a soul that casts all its cares on Thee. In Thee do I trust; in Thee I place all my hope.

4TH POINT. To know God, without being conscious of our own misery, gives rise to presumption; to know our misery, without knowing God, gives rise to despair; to know the abyss of our misery, and the abyss of the mercy of God, cause hope and joy to take up their habitation in the soul. God is not only God, but He is a God Mediator, a Saviour-God! Jesus is no longer Jesus if you take from Him his mercy; He is no longer Saviour if divested of his tenderness for sinners.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Who is this that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning upon her beloved?" *Canticle*, viii.

"The Lord is the strength of his people, and the protector of the salvation of his anointed." *Psalm* xxvii.

"Cast thy care upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee; He shall not suffer the just to waver forever." *Psalm* liv.

"Because he hoped in me, I will deliver him." *Psalm* xc.

EIGHTEENTH THURSDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON FAITH.

1ST POINT. To be without faith is to be without reason; and not to be a Christian is to be without reason. Faith is above reason; but reason informs us that it is necessary to submit to faith; and that he has no sense who wishes to submit to his reason the very

essential principle of his reason, and that to desire to comprehend what is above his intelligence is to be without intelligence.

2D POINT. Though faith is a mystery, reason convinces us that ours is true, and has been revealed to us by God himself. The antiquity of the Catholic religion; its establishment by poor fishermen; its invariable duration from that time; the miracles which are wrought therein; its diffusion over all the earth; the purity of its doctrines and precepts; the sanctity of those who live according to its laws; the majesty of its ceremonies; the profound science of its doctors; the almost infinite number of its martyrs; all tend to persuade the reasonable mind that there is either no religion in the world, or that this alone is true.

3D POINT. The Church cannot deceive me, because God himself hath revealed to her all the holy truths which she believes and teaches, and his Spirit abideth with her forever. Hence I cannot wander astray in believing. "I would not," says St. Austin, "believe in the Gospel itself, if the Church did not declare to me that it is necessary." I will receive no meaning of the Scriptures which the Church does not authorize me to receive. One believes nothing, if he does not believe all that God has revealed, and all that his Church teaches.

4TH POINT. To be a Catholic it is necessary to believe generally all the articles of faith, without exception, that the Church teaches. It is necessary to believe with humility, through a profound submission of spirit. It is necessary to believe all firmly, without doubt or discussion. It is necessary to believe all efficaciously, living conformably to one's belief.

Oh my God! thy Church is visible, and shining like the sun; it enlightens all minds, as the sun enlightens the earth; it gives life of grace to all the faithful, as the sun gives that of nature to all living bodies. I wish, then, to live and die a child of thy Church; I renounce my own reason, and submit it to the empire of thy faith; I am taught, by my reason, that my religion would not be divine if it were not above my reason. I say, without fear, that Thou wouldst not be God if Thou wert not incomprehensible, and that my soul could not adore Thee if my mind could comprehend Thee. I submit, then, forever, my mind to thy faith, and my heart to thy law; I believe, without doubting, ALL that Thou commandest me, and will practise all that I believe. Make me faithful, oh Lord, that I may remain a true child of thy Church, and in the communion of thy fold.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the conviction of things that appear not." *Hebrews*, xi.

"Without faith it is impossible to please God." *Ibid.*

"And we have the word of prophecy more firm: to which you will do well to attend, as to a light shining in a dark place." 2 *Peter*, i.

"For we walk by faith and not by sight." 2 *Corinthians*, v.

"Shall not my soul be subject to God?" *Psalm* lxi.

EIGHTEENTH FRIDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON SPIRITUAL DIFFICULTIES.

"*Why do you think evil in your hearts?*"

1st Point. I am tormented by evil thoughts! Why do they torment you? I fear that I shall consent to them! This fear is salutary, and will protect you from them. I have fallen into sin! You must quickly raise yourself. God is angry with me! It is in your power to appease Him.

2d Point. Walk with more vigilance; work with more fervor; speak with more circumspection; serve God with more fidelity; confess without delay; humble yourself without disturbing yourself. One evil cannot be repaired by another. One sin is not to be cured by another sin.

3d Point. This temptation is importunate; yes, it is necessary for you. It preserves you in humility; it discovers to you your weakness and utter dependence; it prevents your presuming on your own strength. Without temptation you cannot be proved; without conflict one cannot be crowned; without the cross one cannot be saved.

Oh my God, be Thou near me, and I will not fear the powers of hell, when they combine against me. Without Thee I am only weakness; I can do nothing of myself, but, with thy aid, I can do all. If my temptation is violent Thou canst moderate it: Thou wilt hinder the devil from tempting me, or give me stronger grace to resist his assaults.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Let not your heart be troubled." *St. John*, xiv.

"And because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee." *Tobias*, xii.

"God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it." 1 *Corinthians*, x.

"Blessed is the man whose help is from Thee." *Psalm* lxxxiii

EIGHTEENTH SATURDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

MOTIVES FOR HOPE.

1st Point. Though I have committed sins, salvation is still open to me; and though I am imperfect, it is my privilege to become holy.

I am a great sinner, but God is as good as I am sinful. All holy as He is, He loves sinners, since it was for them that He delivered his only Son to death. He invites them to return to Him; He declares that He desires not their death, but rather that they be converted and live; He promises to pardon them when they shall have confessed their faults and sought his forgiveness. Does God demand impossibilities? So far from it, that He only invites them to convert themselves and do penance. Penance is available to salvation during life. He never despises a contrite and humble heart. What, then, do you fear, poor sinner? why lose courage? why despair?

2d Point. Christ assures us that He came into the world to save *sinners;* He ate with them, and went much among them; He has never maltreated any one who applied to Him for succor; He transformed himself into the likeness of a criminal, through love for them; He died for them on a cross, to accomplish their salvation, and while He suffered, besought his Father to forgive them. A single drop of his blood was sufficient to efface the sins of all mankind, but in his generous love, He shed it all to the last drop. He gave to St. Peter and his successors the power to forgive sins. Can He command us to be more perfect than himself? He commands us to forgive our enemies always, and from the heart, under pain of eternal death; hence He will pardon from

his heart, and at all times, the injuries we do Him, otherwise it would appear that He wished us to be more perfect than himself.

3d Point. He not only desires our salvation, but also our perfection, for every workman loveth his own work and wishes it to be perfect. Since He desires us to be holy and perfect like unto himself, He gives us the grace to become so. Does it not require a great perfection to love our enemies, to suffer injuries, to confess the faith before tyrants, and be willing to die for one's religion? Where is that Christian who is not obliged rather to die than commit a deliberate mortal sin? How can we keep the commandments of God if we do not overcome our passions and do great violence to ourselves? God has ordered us to keep his commandments, and to love Him above all things. We have, then, the grace to love Him and to become saints.

Go on, my soul! why do we lose courage? God is infinitely good; He desires to save us; He spares us only for this; He can render us perfect; He desires it; exhorts us to it; prays us to become so, and supplies us with the means of sanctification. Your malice can be measured, but the mercy of God has no limits. If you offer from your heart one true sigh of repentance, He will save you; if you wish to be delivered from your lukewarm state, He will deliver you. Oh, my Lord and my God! I hope in Thee, and it is with the hope of thy assistance that I am going to begin from this moment to serve Thee, love Thee, and to lead a new and better life.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"For God so loved the world, as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting." *St. John*, iii.

"For God sent not his Son into the world, to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by Him." *Ibid.*

"You know not of what spirit you are. The Son of man came not to destroy souls, but to save." *St. Luke*, ix.

"Come to me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you." *St. Matt.* xi.

"As I live, saith the Lord God, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live." *Ezechiel*, xxxiii.

"Be converted, therefore, ye sinners, and do justice before God, believing that He will show his mercy to you." *Tobias*, xiii.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE GOSPEL. *Matt.* xxii. 2–14.

"AT that time, Jesus spoke to the Scribes and Pharisees in a parable, saying: The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a king who made a marriage for his son. And he sent his servants, to call them that were invited to the marriage: and they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying: Tell them that were invited: Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my beeves and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come ye to the marriage. But they neglected and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise. And the rest laid hands on his servants, and having treated them contumeliously, put them to death. But when the king had heard of it, he was angry, and, sending his armies, he destroyed those murderers and burnt their city. Then he saith to his servants: The marriage, indeed, is ready; but they that were invited were not worthy. Go ye, therefore, into the highways, and as many as you shall find call to the marriage. And his servants, going forth into the ways, gathered together all they found, both bad and good: and the marriage was filled with guests. And the king went in to see the guests; and he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment. And he saith to him: Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment? But he was silent. Then the king said to the waiters: Bind his hands, and his feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen."

Meditation.

ON THE GOSPEL.

1ST POINT. The King who made this great feast for his Son, is God the Father, who desired his Son to espouse our nature by his incarnation. To render a marriage happy and perfect there must be an equality between those who are thus allied. God did not adhere to this law when He united himself with the lowest of all created intelligences, which is the flesh of Adam; but He has rendered it so beautiful, pure, holy and precious, that it is now equal with God, and makes only one person with Him.

Oh fine marriage this! O wonderful union! God has lavished all his riches on man, and man has given Him, in return, all his poverty. God has bestowed on him his immortality and happi-

ness; man has given Him only sufferings and death. Oh admirable exchange! The Creator of man clothed himself with a body, wished to be born of a virgin, and, taking on himself our nature, has given us his divinity!

2d Point. The Son of God, not satisfied with uniting himself to his holy humanity, desires to unite himself to all men in particular. This is what He does in heaven, when He espouses all the blessed by the light of his glory. Their marriage is indissoluble and the feast eternal. Consider the magnificence and spaciousness of the hall where this glorious feast is held; behold its rich adornments, and the splendor wherewith it is ornamented; consider the guests, who surround their king without pride or ambition; consider the feast. The saints shall be seated at the table of the Lord, and be filled with the fatness thereof. Oh my God, happy are those who assist at thy feast, and eat bread in thy kingdom.

3d Point. All mankind are invited thither, for God desires to save all men, and furnishes them with the means necessary for their salvation, but there are only a few who assist at this feast; not because they cannot, but because they will not, as the Gospel shows us. There are others who do not refuse, but excuse themselves; they defer their conversion from day to day, because they wish to amass riches for their children, and are too much attached to their pleasures and pursuits. Others put to death the servants of the King who invites them; they are those who stifle the inspirations of grace, by which they refuse to put on the nuptial robe, and reject the invitation to the feast. Are you one of those audacious souls who impiously declare that they do not desire to obey God, or attend his feasts? Are you one of those indolent ones, who defer coming when God invites them, and bid Him wait until they are ready? Are you a deicide, who crucify Jesus Christ anew in your heart, trample Him under foot, profane his blood, and outrage his Holy Spirit, by stifling those graces which cost Him blood and life? What will you say when the inexorable hand of death is on you? What will you reply, when you are questioned in the day of judgment.*

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

NINETEENTH MONDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. There are feasts not only in heaven, but also on earth. The Son of God espouses in holy communion the souls of all such as receive Him worthily. "He who is united to God by charity," says St. Paul, "becomes one spirit with Him;" but he who unites himself to God by communion, becomes not only one spirit, but also one flesh with Him. Oh, what an honor for a creature to become the spouse of God! Oh, what advantages may not the soul claim from such an alliance! Jesus lavishes all his goods on the soul He espouses; his body, soul, humanity, divinity, grace, virtue and merits; but what does He receive in return? Misery, poverty, ingratitude and perfidy. What does He demand? Your heart, love, and obedience. Ah, my soul, will you any longer refuse your heart to Him who has so freely given you his? Will you give nothing to Him who has given you all? Will you refuse to come to his feast? What do you fear? Why do you tremble as you approach? It is a God of infinite love who desires and waits to espouse you. And still you excuse yourself —still you do not desire to partake of this divine feast, wherein He gives you himself.

2d Point. The king having been informed how ill his servants had been treated by the guests whom he had invited, sent his messengers of wrath to burn their cities, lay waste their country, and put all to the sword. Behold how God chastises those who excuse themselves, or neglect to approach his holy table under the pretext of being engaged in their own affairs. He sends them afflictions without end; overthrows their fortunes; deprives them of their possessions; consumes them with infirmities and sickness, and takes them out of the world at a moment when they least expect it. Their contemptuous refusal kindles the anger of God; as we understand in the Gospel. Are you not one of those who ill treated the servants of God, and resist his inspirations? Learn what it is to kindle the anger of the Almighty. He declares that you shall not eat at his table on earth or in heaven, if you persist in your vain and insolent excuses. He will give your place to another.

3d Point. The king called in the poor, the blind and the lame to assist at the feast of his Son. Place yourself among this miser-

able company, and do not allow your spiritual infirmities to prevent your approaching the holy table. You are poor, blind, and lame; and it was such as you who are invited to the banquet! A physician is not needed for the healthy, but for the sick. "Come to me," says the spouse, "all ye who labor and are loaded with the burden of your iniquities"—come quickly, I will console, strengthen, comfort, and heal you.

4TH POINT. The king on going into the hall of the feast, saw there a man who had not on the wedding garment. He had him taken, bound hand and foot, and cast into exterior darkness. It is necessary to have on the nuptial robe of grace when we assist at this august feast; it is necessary to have a heart purified from all mortal sin, to communicate worthily; it is necessary above all, to have charity towards our neighbor, for without union there is an abuse of communion. He who approaches the holy table without being reconciled with his adversary shall be driven out from the banquet-hall, and be cast into hell, where he shall find only darkness, torments, regrets, weeping and gnashing of teeth. Oh Lord my God, what shall I do? If I refuse the honor Thou hast conferred on me by inviting me to this feast, Thou threatenest me with thy anger, and my damnation is inevitable; and if I assist thereat without the nuptial robe, I shall be cast into exterior darkness. All this appears terrible to me; but there is no deliberating on the part that I must take. I desire to clothe myself with the nuptial robe, that I may become thy spouse. Oh my soul, it is not a little thing to be the spouse of a God! Prepare yourself, then, for this great honor in the best manner that you can—wash your robe if it is soiled by any sin; above all, go and be reconciled with your neighbor; and you shall approach the table of the Lord, and partake of the wondrous feast that He has prepared for you, and be inebriated with pleasures which eye hath not seen, ear heard, nor the human heart conceived.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"And I say to you, that none of those men that were invited, shall taste of my supper." *St. Luke*, xiv.

"Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the feeble, and the blind, and the lame." *Ibid.*

"He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him." *St. John*, vi.

"Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him." *St. Matt.* xxv

"A certain man made a great supper and invited many. And they begun all at once to make excuses." *St. Luke*, xiv.

NINETEENTH TUESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE TENDERNESS OF JESUS FOR SINNERS.

1st Point. Jesus loves sinners; He condescended to frequent their company; He willingly eats with them; He declares that it was for them that He came into the world; He was never known to reject any one who addressed himself to Him; He even showed grace to an adulterous woman whom the people desired to stone.

Jesus illustrates his interest and tenderness for sinners by four excellent figures. The first is that of a merchant who sold all that he possessed for the purpose of buying a pearl of great price. This pearl is our soul, and the merchant is the Son of God. What has He given to purchase it? His goods, his blood, and his life; and you have given it to the devil in exchange for a dunghill of honor and an imaginary enjoyment.

2d Point. The second is that of a woman, who, having lost a piece of silver, lit her lamp and swept her house, when, having found it, she invited her friends to rejoice with her. "Thus," says the Son of God, "there is joy in heaven upon one sinner doing penance." "Observe," says St. Thomas, "that the Son of God does not say that He has bought this drachm of silver, (by which is meant our soul,) at the price of his blood, but that He has found it, for He so much esteems a soul, that He believes He has it for nothing, although He has paid the price of his blood for it. He does not invite the angels to rejoice with the man that was lost and then found, but with himself, as if he were of such infinite consequence to Him, that He could not enjoy the felicity of his heavenly kingdom without him!" Oh, senseless man! how can you despise a soul that has cost the Son of God so much? How can you give it away to the devil, who is your worst enemy, for nothing, when it was purchased at so dear a price?

3d Point. The third is that of a shepherd, who left ninety-nine sheep and went into the desert to search for one that was lost, which, having found, he placed it on his shoulders, and invited all his friends to rejoice with him. When he found the strayed one,

he did not beat it with his crook, or allow his dog to punish it for wandering, nor did he drive it before him, but lifted it in his arms and bore it on his shoulders, perhaps, because he thought it was fatigued, or, perhaps, because he feared it would wander astray again. "Thus," saith the Son of God, "there shall be more joy in heaven upon the sinner doing penance, than for ninety and nine who are just."

4TH POINT. The fourth is that of the prodigal son who returned, consumed with miseries and debaucheries, to his father's house. His father seeing him approach, ran out to meet him, embraced and blessed him, and put a new robe on him, and placed a ring on his finger; after which he treated him magnificently, with every mark of rejoicing, without once reproaching him for his crimes and disobedience, or giving him an opportunity to utter the apology he had framed for the occasion. Behold how Jesus receives a sinner who, in the character of a true penitent, returns to Him! He receives him by his graces and inspirations; He gives him the kiss of peace, forgets the past, receives him into his love and confidence, fills his heart with consolation, and bids his angels to take part in his joy.

Oh my God! my Saviour! Thou art sweet and charitable. Thou art tender and merciful towards sinners! I, like Adam, felt afraid to meet Thee after my sin; I hid myself in the thickest shades, but now that I know thy goodness, I will return to Thee with confidence, and never abandon myself to despair. Seek me and save me; I am a poor prodigal who has consumed all the goods of nature and of grace that I received from Thee; I have sinned, oh my God, my Father! before heaven and in thy sight, and no longer deserve to be called thy child; it is even too great a favor to ask to be numbered among thy servants. Have mercy on me, oh God of compassion, for I am resolved to do penance, and give as much joy to the angels by my conversion, as I have given them grief by my sinful life.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend. In whom I have taken thee from the ends of the earth, and from the remote parts thereof have called thee, and said to thee: Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and have not cast thee away." *Isaias*, xli.

"Fear not, for I am with thee; turn not aside, for I am thy God; I have strengthened thee, and have helped thee, and the right hand of my just One hath upheld thee." *Ibid.*

"Therefore, whether we live, or whether we die, we are the Lord's." *Romans*, xiv.

"For you are bought with a great price." 1 *Corinthians*, vi.

NINETEENTH WEDNESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON WHAT GOD DOES TO GAIN SINNERS.

1st Point. First, He seeks them, which is astonishing. One does not seek an enemy except through revenge, through hopes of gain, or from motives of fear. But God has nothing to hope or fear from a sinner; He can annihilate him or precipitate him into hell. Why, then, does the Majesty of heaven seek you, wicked and perfidious man? Because He loves you, and desires your salvation.

How often has God, after having been outraged and irritated by your crimes, sought you, and invited you to be reconciled with Him? How often has He pardoned you? He is ready to pardon still. God does not expect you to be more merciful than himself; He commands you, under pain of eternal death, to forgive your enemies as often as they offend or injure you. Will He not, then, forgive you, his creature, all your offences against Him?

2d Point. Not only does God seek the sinner and pardon him as often as he humbles himself and implores his grace, but He seeks him first, and invites him to be reconciled. When the question arises of being reconciled with an enemy, it is extremely painful to nature to make the first advances; each one believing himself to be in the right, waits to receive satisfaction for the offence that has been offered. What outrages have we not committed against God? We are invariably the aggressors, and the fault is always on our side. Nevertheless, He seeks us first by the graces with which he enlightens our minds and touches our hearts. Oh my God! remember what I am, and as Thou art infinitely good, do not suffer me to become more wicked, but deliver me from the power of evil.

3d Point. Not only does He invite the sinner to be at peace with Him, but He asks it in the manner of a suppliant, just as if He had offended us, and we had it in our power to inflict evil on Him! "*We are, therefore*," says St. Paul, "*ambassadors for*

Christ, God as it were exhorting by us. For Christ we beseech you, be ye reconciled to God."* It is not only through his ambassadors that He pleads with us, but He himself waits at the door of our heart, and knocks continually for admission. "*The voice of my beloved knocking: Open to me, for my head is full of dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.*"† "*Behold I stand at the gate and knock;*" He saith: "*if any man shall hear my voice, and open to me the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*"‡

Ah my soul, will you always be engaged in warfare with your God? Will you never open unto Him the door of your heart? How often has He not knocked there by his inspirations? When will you give Him entrance? Do you desire Him to await your pleasure? What will you gain by making war with God? He is strong and mighty, and you must, sooner or later, fall into his hands! Let us, then, prostrate ourselves at his feet, implore his grace and mercy, and attach ourselves to his service by the most inviolable fidelity.§

NINETEENTH THURSDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE MEANS OF EXCITING IN OURSELVES THE LOVE OF GOD.

1st Point. We ought to love God for his amiable and adorable perfections. He is not only infinitely good, beautiful, wise, powerful, kind, and merciful, but He is goodness itself, beauty itself, wisdom itself, power itself, sweetness and mercy itself. He is the goodness from which all good is derived; the source of all beauty, wisdom, power, sweetness and mercy. Oh my soul, if you love that which is good, why do you not love Him who is goodness itself? if you love that which is beautiful, why refuse to love Him through whom all is beautiful, who constitutes all beauty, and who is infinite beauty itself.

2d Point. We ought to love God, because He commands it; it is a great favor that He even permits it, but He expressly commands it, and makes it the first and greatest commandment of the law, which obliges all men indispensably, because they have hearts to love, and grace to keep a commandment so sweet, so just, and so reasonable. My soul, do you not desire to obey

* 2 Corinthians, v. † Canticles, v. ‡ Apocalypse, iii.
§ Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

your God? Of what nature is your heart composed, if you cannot love a Being so good and merciful? Can you justly say, that his law is difficult to keep, when He only commands you to love Him, and gives you grace and his Spirit to do so? He does not command you to despoil yourself of all your earthly goods, nor to make a vow of chastity, nor renounce all liberty! He only commands you to observe his law, and to give Him the preference in your heart above all creatures, who dispute the possession of it with Him. Can any demand be more just or easy to comply with?

3d Point. We ought to love God, because He first loved us. His love is as ancient as his being. He has loved us from all eternity, with a love of preference. He has chosen us from among barbarous nations, whom He has left in the darkness of infidelity. He has loved us with a disinterested love, having no need of our services, and expecting no benefits from us. He loves us with a constant and tender love, such as that of a mother, which is the symbol alluded to in the Scriptures. He loves us with a strong love, surmounting all difficulties in the way of loving ungrateful and rebellious children. He loves us with an infinite love, and desires to give us eternal joys in his heavenly kingdom, which is a good so infinite that neither the heart nor mind of man can measure or conceive it. To obtain this boon for us He has given us the blood of his own Son, which is an infinite price. In fine, He loves us all in general, and each one in particular, being ready to die for us individually, if it were necessary. Oh my soul, to whom will you give your heart, if not to Him who has given you his? To whom is your allegiance due, if not to Him who has paid an infinite price for you? Oh beauty, ever ancient and ever new, too late have I known Thee; too late have I loved Thee. Let us love God, my brethren, because He has first loved us.

We ought to love God, because He has made us like unto himself, and himself like unto us; and because He unites himself closely to us. Every creature loves its own resemblance, why, then, do we not love God, who has imprinted on us the image of his own divinity, and clothed himself with our nature, to win our love? Is He not united to us by all the ties of consanguinity, affinity, and all the qualities of a parent? Is He not our father, our mother, our head, and our spouse? Does He not love us by his Holy Spirit? Does He not treat us as his members? Where are the members who do not acknowledge, obey, and love their head? He is our Shepherd, and we are his sheep; He is our Redeemer, and we are his slaves; He is our Master, and we are his

disciples; He is our King, and we are his subjects; He is our Captain, and we are his soldiers; our Father, and we are his children. If we are sick, He is our Physician; if we are blind, He is our Guide; if afflicted, He is our Consoler; if persecuted, He is our Defender. He is the best and most faithful of friends; He changes not for novelty, interest, inequality, prosperity or adversity, as other men do. Have we any other end than God? Can we have any other? Is it not to love, serve, and possess Him that we are in this world?

Oh, my God, I well know that my heart was made for Thee, because it can find no repose out of Thee. Unhappy is that soul who withdraws itself from Thee, expecting to find something bet ter than thyself.*

NINETEENTH FRIDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. In fine, we ought to love God, for the benefits that He has conferred on us, in the order of nature, grace and glory; benefits great in quantity, infinite in quality, pure in intention, and continual in their endurance. All good and perfect gifts proceed from the Most High, the Father of Light. God has conferred great benefits on us in the past, He continues to bestow still greater on us in the present, He will load us with a still greater number in the future, and that by his own pure goodness, without being induced to do so by our merits, or deterred by our sins and ingratitude. What benefits so great as our redemption, justification, and the glory of paradise? Call to mind, if you can, all the benefits with which He has loaded you since your birth, and the evils from which He has preserved you.

2d Point. Is He under any obligation to love you? Has He need of you? Why, then, does He love you? It is to render you more happy by his love, and because you are poor and miserable. He communicates his gifts to you, which are so excellent in their substance, so precious in their quality, so grand in their multitude, and so diversified in their kind; so stable in their endurance, so useful in their designs, so proper at all times, and so convenient to all men in all places, and all that He asks, in exchange, is your

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

poor love. He still bears our miseries, and immolates himself for us. For what? To deliver us from eternal death, and procure for us the enjoyment of eternal felicity.

3d Point. Oh great God! oh source of infinite good! oh centre of all hearts and love! how is it that I have not loved Thee until now? that I have not responded to thy favors, but with the deepest ingratitude? Oh, I wish to begin to love Thee, my God, my strength, and my light! I will love Thee, my God, because Thou art infinitely good, and hast loved me from all eternity, loaded me with benefits, and made it impossible for me to be happy without Thee. I will, then, love Thee with all my heart, all my soul, and with all my strength. I will love only Thee, and nothing beside Thee. I will love Thee entirely, ardently, and constantly. I will love Thee in time, that I may love, adore, and praise Thee through all eternity. Amen.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." *St. Luke*, x.

"By this hath the charity of God appeared towards us, because God hath sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we may live in Him." 1 *St. John*, iv.

"Let us, therefore, love God, because God hath first loved us." *Ibid.*

"I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength." *Psalm* xvii.

NINETEENTH SATURDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE SMALL NUMBER OF THE SAVED.

1st Point. God desires the salvation of all mankind; He sheds his light over all; He does not refuse his grace to any one; He delivered his Son unto death for the salvation of sinners; He declares that He requires not the death of the sinner, but rather that he be converted and live; He never abandons a man who does not first abandon Him; He seeks, from morning until night, for laborers for his vineyard, and gives them their reward. Why, then, are there so few saved?

2d Point. It is because nature is corrupt, and has an insatiable hankering for evil; it is because mankind attach themselves to

the pleasures of the senses which debauch the heart; it is because they follow, blindly, the maxims of the world, which are opposed to those of Jesus Christ; it is because they live in sin, and do no penance; it is because they do not comply with what is necessary for their salvation until it is too late, or wait until death surprises them before they attempt to accomplish it; it is because they only cease sinning when they are deprived of the power to do so; it is because they think only of the things of time, ignoring those of eternity; it is because they rebel, and refuse to keep the commandments of God; it is, finally, because they die as they have lived; and as the greater part of them pass their lives in sin, it is not surprising that they die in their sins.

3d Point. At the hour of death God despises those who have, during life, despised Him. The devil seldom releases at death the prey that he has acquired during life. One corrects, with great difficulty, in old age, the evil habits he has contracted in his youth. Man carries with him to the grave the vices of his youth; they penetrate the marrow of his bones and sleep in the dust with him. Why, then, do we wonder that so many are damned, and so few saved?

Oh, my Father and my God! what will become of me after death? If I am saved, it will be through thy pure grace; if I am lost, it will be through my own pure malice. What canst Thou do more for me than Thou hast done? Is grace wanting to me? Is it not in my power to receive the sacraments, which are the assured means of my salvation? Can I not do penance, at all times, for my sins, as Thou hast commanded me? Can I not do that which so many persons, as weak as myself, have done? "Oh Israel," saith God, "if thou art lost it will be through thy own perverseness; if thou art saved, it will be through my grace and mercy, which is never wanting to any."

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"What is there that I ought to do more to my vineyard, that I have not done to it?" *Isaias*, v.

"His bones shall be filled with the vices of his youth: and they shall sleep with him in the dust." *Job*, xx.

"Destruction is thy own, O Israel: thy help is only in me. *Osee*, xiii.

"All have gone aside, they are become unprofitable together. there is none that doeth good, no not one." *Psalm* lii.

"The holy man is perished out of the earth; and there is none upright among men." *Micheas*, vii.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE GOSPEL. *St. John*, iv. 46–53.

"AT that time, there was a certain ruler, whose son was sick at Capharnaum. He having heard that Jesus was come from Judea into Galilee, went to Him and prayed Him to come down and heal his son: for he was at the point of death. Jesus therefore said to him: Unless you see signs and wonders, you believe not. The ruler saith to Him: Lord, come down before that my son die. Jesus saith to him: Go thy way, thy son liveth. The man believed the word that Jesus said to him, and went his way. And as he was going down, his servants met him; and they brought word, saying, that his son lived. He asked, therefore, of them, the hour wherein he grew better. And they said to him: Yesterday, at the seventh hour, the fever left him. The father, therefore, knew that it was at the same hour that Jesus said to him: Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house.

Meditation.

ON THE GOSPEL.

1ST POINT. A certain ruler went in search of the Son of God, to beseech Him to cure his son. But for this affliction, he would not perhaps have thought of Him. Thus it is that the miseries of this life oblige us to have recourse to God. It is chiefly the rich and powerful of this world, who never resort to God, except when driven by necessity to do so. It is for this end that He sends us all manner of crosses; He desires to disgust us with the world, detach us from life, make us desire death, and sigh incessantly after the felicity of the saints; He wishes us to understand and feel our dependence on Him, and the continual need we have of his grace; He lets us alone under the oppression of our miseries, until we have learned that He alone can relieve us.

2D POINT. What is your state? Are you sick or well? Are you in prosperity or adversity? Have you trouble and sorrows to contend with? Are you bowed down with affliction? If not, you are worthy of compassion; for there is nothing more miserable than a man to whom nothing is wanting, but the wrath of God. If you are in affliction, why do you not address yourself to God, and implore Him to assuage the bitterness of the evil that weighs on you? Does He not visit you with these sorrows? Is there a

power on earth that can deliver you from them, without his permission? And if it is his will to relieve and console you, is there a power in hell that can prevent Him? You say that you pray; yes, but in a state of mortal sin. You are his declared enemy—you are carrying on an implacable warfare with Him, and yet you wish Him to hear and answer your prayers for pardon and deliverance! You obey none of his commands; and yet you are so arrogant and presumptuous as to desire Him to grant you all that you ask for, without delay! You have crucified Him in your heart, and you wish Him to heal the diseases of that same heart! You waste his graces, and expect Him to preserve and sustain you in goodness. Reconcile yourself with God; ask pardon for your sins; seek his kingdom and justice, and all else shall be added unto you.

3d Point. Jesus is not only the physician of the soul, but also of the body. He sends us infirmities either to punish us for our sins, or to disgust us with life; either to humble our spirit, or increase our merit; to make us take part in his sufferings, or to be honored by our patience; for there is nothing that gives more glory to God than tranquillity in suffering, and patience under affliction. It exemplifies all the Christian virtues in their highest perfection; makes faith shine forth amidst darkness; hope triumph over infirmity; charity sweeten the bitterest sorrow; and resignation and conformity reign in the soul, even when God seems to have abandoned it to its griefs. But it is the purpose of his design, by this apparent severity, to oblige the sinner to have recourse to Him; to change his life; to acknowledge his goodness and power; to love Him, and to crown Him with joy after He has delivered him from the womb of death. It is therefore necessary, like this ruler, to address ourselves to Him, and implore Him to heal our bodily ills, if the removal of our infirmities and miseries will not be hurtful to our soul.

4th Point. Do you have recourse to God? Do you pray to Him when you are sick? Do you ask Him for the health of your soul before that of the body? Do you take as much pains to cleanse your soul as you do to purify your body of disease? Have you not more confidence in physicians than in Jesus Christ? Do you know that they are powerless to aid you, unless God enlightens them with regard to your disease, and blesses the remedies that they apply? How is it, then, that you confide in no higher power than your physicians? How is it that you depend so entirely on mere human skill, and listen with more eagerness and faith to their opinions than the words of Jesus Christ? Are they

omnipotent to save? Alas, no; when all human remedies have failed, there is nothing left for them to do, but to recommend you to put your conscience in order and receive the great physician of souls!

Confess that you have neither faith, hope, nor charity; confess your want of resignation to the divine will, and your doubts of divine Providence. Imitate the example of king David, who, in his sore affliction addressed himself to God in these words: "*Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak; heal me, O Lord, for my bones are troubled. And my soul is troubled exceedingly.*"*

TWENTIETH MONDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. The ruler besought our Lord to come to his house, because his son was near unto death. Jesus discerning his want of faith, in thinking that He was powerless to restore him unless present, reproached him with incredulity; but he did not feel corrected by his rebuke; on the contrary, he besought the Son of God more fervently to grant his petition, in these words: "*Lord, come down before that my son die.*" Jesus said to him: "*Go thy way, thy son liveth.*" Believing, he went home, and found that his son was healed. Alas, how sick your soul is! it is consumed with fever! there seems but little to hope for! how tepid it is in the service of God! with what furious passions it has to combat! Alas! it is in danger of death, if not already dead. Hasten, then, to the Church; confess your sins with as much sorrow as you can; present yourself at the altar, and say to the Son of God: Lord, thou knowest the state of my soul; Thou beholdest how sick it is, and how near unto death; descend quickly, O Lord, come to my house, that I may be cured, for Thou alone canst give and preserve life.

2d Point. "*Unless you see signs and wonders you believe not.*" Does not Jesus Christ address these words to you? Are you not one of those incredulous persons who do not believe unless they see and touch? What, then, is faith? It is a divine virtue, which makes us believe that which we do not see with our bodily eyes, and that which does not reveal itself to our spiritual sight. It de-

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

pends alone on the Word and authority of God, which makes it believe that which seems impossible to human reason. Who, then, will not be astonished at the infidelity of a soul who finds it difficult to believe what God declares and reason teaches? He is most unreasonable who doubts that God is in us, that He fills the heavens and the earth, and that He is infinitely wise, good, and powerful. Why, then, do you believe He is no longer in you because you are not sensible to his presence? why, then, do you abandon yourself to grief when He sends you affliction? Do you not know that it is intended for your good? Would you dictate to God? What cause have you to doubt his wisdom, power, and goodness?

I believe, oh my God! do Thou increase my faith. Bear with my incredulity. I renounce the light of my own reason; I desire no longer to listen to the suggestions of my senses; it is sufficient for me to know that Thou hast spoken; for me to believe without doubting, however impossible human reason may make it appear. In whatever state I may be, I shall be contented, since faith assures me that Thou dost think of me, love me, and cause all things to work together for my good.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"The other disciples, therefore, said to him: We have seen the Lord. But he said to them: Unless I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, I will not believe." *St. John*, xx.

"Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed." *Ibid.*

"Good things and evil, life and death, poverty and riches, are from God." *Eccles.* xi.

"When he slew them, then they sought Him: and they returned, and came to Him early in the morning." *Psalm* lxxvii.

"For whereas he had always feared God from his infancy, and kept his commandments, he repined not against God because the evil of blindness had befallen him; but continued immovable in the fear of God, giving thanks to God all the days of his life." *Tobias*, ii.

TWENTIETH TUESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE WORDS, "HE WAS AT THE POINT OF DEATH."

Venial Sin.

1ST POINT. "*He was at the point of death.*" Venial sins lead to those which are mortal. They indicate a diseased soul, whose safety is in peril. The sinner stops not where he falls, but is dragged still lower by the weight of his sin. The devil and his passions accelerate his progress, giving him no rest until he falls into the lowest abyss, which is mortal sin.

2D POINT. "*He was at the point of death.*" Great sins can be avoided only by the assistance of a powerful grace. Venial sins cool the charity of the soul towards God, and that of God towards the soul, after which He ceases to give his grace so powerfully or so frequently as before. He no longer enlightens the spirit, or impresses the will, as formerly, but suffers them to become obscured and hardened. The mind no longer maintains an inferior position in the obedience it owes its superior, the soul, because the latter has striven against God, and been unfaithful to Him. God no longer defends the soul, as in former times, against the assaults and temptations of the devil, the snares of the world, and the lusts of the flesh; He no longer leads it away from the dangerous occasions of sin, or visits it during pious exercises or prayer, with consolations and extraordinary demonstrations of his love; He permits it to be tormented by exterior pains, trials, vexation, and disgust, which force it to seek for consolation among creatures, and at last cause it to fall into some great sin. "*Rebuke me not, O Lord, in thy indignation, nor chastise me in thy wrath.*" At least, chastise me as a father, and not as a judge, and send me trials which will recall me to Thee, instead of separating me from Thee.

3D POINT. "*He was at the point of death.*" Venial sin leads to mortal, because it inflames concupiscence, which is the fever spot of the soul; it diminishes charity as much as it increases concupiscence. The evil proclivities implanted in our very nature incline us towards this evil, and it requires but a slight impetus to ensure a lamentable fall. Several venial sins do not make one mortal sin, but an indulgence in little sins inevitably dispose us to the commission of those that are deadly to the life of the soul.

Oh my God! have I forfeited thy friendship? have I not lost

thy grace? Behold the sins of my life, the darkness of my mind, the lukewarmness of my will, my disordered passions, the revolts of my flesh. Save me, oh my God! and abandon me not to myself; let all mortal miseries befall me rather than mortal sin.*

TWENTIETH WEDNESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1st Point. "*He was at the point of death.*" Inordinate attachment of the heart to creatures inevitably separates it from the love of its Creator. It is impossible to serve two masters, without loving the one and hating the other. The heart, between its Creator and the creature, is like iron between two magnets, which in the same degree as it approaches one it recedes from the other; it is attracted by its affections to one object, and repelled by its aversion from the other. However pure and divine love may be between creatures in the beginning, it soon becomes human, without passing beyond the limits of reason; then natural, and excites the first fever of concupiscence; from natural it becomes importunate; from importunate carnal, and from carnal impure. In fine, from having commenced with the Spirit, it ends with the flesh. Oh, how many holy and devout souls fall into this slough because they do not stifle the sentiment in its birth; presume too much on their own strength by exposing themselves to dangerous occasions; love too many persons without discretion, and with too much tenderness; and commit small infidelities. Is your heart free? is it not trammelled by some inordinate affection, led astray by importunate desires, and altogether occupied with creature love? Rouse yourself from this state; break asunder quickly the chains that bind you; separate yourself from all that separates you from God, for you are near unto death.

2d Point. The soul that allows itself to commit often and vol untarily little faults insensibly divests itself of all horror for those which are great. The habit of venial sin makes us familiar with mortal. There is a great resemblance between them. Both proceed from concupiscence; both are tempted and led on by the same demon; both are attracted by the same pleasures; both progress towards the same object; both seek the same company, and

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

both follow the same example. The familiarity which is contracted with venial sin, gradually decreases all fear of mortal sin; it divests it of that frightful aspect which rendered it so formidable; and when dread diminishes, effrontery increases; from being accustomed to live in the practice of one, it is natural and easy to pass to the other. Is not this your experience? is it not true that you once fled from it as from a deadly serpent, but now expose yourself to it, approach it, and defile yourself by contact with it? Assuredly you will receive a deadly wound.

3D POINT. "*He was at the point of death.*" Habit is second nature, which seems stronger and more indomitable than the first; it is a torrent which carries away all that it finds in its current without resistance; it is habit which urges a soul on and increases its inclination to evil; it acquires power over it by reiterated acts, the little contributing as much as the great to its final downfall. It is well that a number of venial sins does not make one mortal sin; nevertheless, it is true that many light faults dispose the soul to the commission of those which are great. If you accustom yourself to habits of untruth in little things, when your passions are inflamed you will be unscrupulous in your betrayal of the truth without reflection or thought. Can you doubt this, when the Son of God himself assures you that he who is unfaithful in little things will also be unfaithful in great?

TWENTIETH THURSDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1ST POINT. Mortal sin is a revolt of the soul, which does not wish to render unto God the obedience due Him, and to submit its will to Him, as to its first beginning and last end. Slight faults do not separate us from Him as our end; but from these, says St. Thomas, the will accustoms itself not to submit to the legitimate order of nature and grace. Alas! how many are dead, who only think they are sick! Oh what a great evil it is to ac custom one's self to evil!

2D POINT. Nature does not go from one extreme to the other, without passing through the intermediate space; the soul does not become wicked at a blow, but serves its apprenticeship in vice as well as in virtue. It begins with little faults, then it commits

great. Grace and mortal sin are the two extremes; one passes from one to the other only through venial sin. A small leak will cause a vessel to sink. A single spark is quite enough to set fire to a forest. One evil thought is enough to kill the soul if that soul is not prompt in stifling it. All beginnings are small but their results are great. A river at its source is a mere thread of water, which makes its way along with much difficulty, but from the discharge of other streams, it becomes in its progress a great and rapid torrent, which inundates lands and sweeps away human habitations.

3D POINT. "*He was at the point of death.*" What causes the death of the soul? The devil, to whom little infidelities gives the power to tempt it more strongly and irresistibly to fall into great sins. Our soul is a citadel, which is besieged by invisible foes. It is only necessary to make a small breach and they will enter, and render themselves masters thereof. God reigns over us by order, the devil by disorder; little faults arise from disorders and irregularities, which give Satan the power to tempt into great sins the soul which has fallen into the habit of venial sin.

You are greatly tempted. Why is this? It is because you are not faithful in little things. You permit yourself little licenses, which insensibly lead you into great ones. Oh, my soul, be afraid of evil that leads to death! Be afraid of little sins, if you desire to avoid great. There is nothing wanting whereby to gain heaven; nothing wanting whereby to lose it. A venial sin cannot damn you, but it may be the beginning of eternal loss, inasmuch as it may lure on to mortal sin; and mortal sin leads to hell.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in that which is greater." *St. Luke*, xvi.

"Behold how small a fire what a great wood it kindleth." *St. James*, iii.

"He that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little." *Ecclesiasticus*, xix.

"He that is unjust in that which is little, is unjust also in that which is greater." *St. Luke*, xvi.

TWENTIETH FRIDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE NATURE AND BAD EFFECT OF A VENIAL SIN.

1st Point. All venial sin is offensive to God, although it does not separate us from his grace. It is an evil which is the result of guilt, consequently greater than all other evils and pains that one can suffer in this life. God loves pain, but He can never love guilt. God produces pain, but He cannot produce or approve of the guilt of sin. Nor will He sanction a venial sin, even were it to effect the greatest good; even if it were to save all the damned in hell, or prevent the damnation of all men. Oh, monstrous evil, which God hates essentially, necessarily, and in a manner infinitely; and notwithstanding this, I do not fear it. I commit it without scruple; I ridicule those who do fear it; I seek my pleasure and amusement in it.

2d Point. Venial sin dishonors God. It wounds his infinite perfections; it offends his sanctity; it is contrary to his purity; it provokes and outrages his justice; it defies his power; it stirs the jealousy of his love, and grieves his spirit. It is wanting in the fidelity that a creature owes his Creator, a subject his king, a friend his friend, a wife her spouse. Though not of the same nature as mortal sin, venial sin, though slight, is still a sin, because it is an evil against God. Oh, terrible words! It were better for all creatures that they had never been born, than that they should be guilty of the least enmity against God, or injure his honor and interests by the commission of evil. But you prefer doing this rather than deprive yourself of a momentary gratification.

3d Point. You dishonor God more effectually by one sin, than you can honor Him by all your good works; and it is better to abstain from one venial sin than to perform all sorts of good actions. You do no good, but are always doing evil. You practise no good works, but incessantly practise those which are bad. Is this the life a Christian ought to lead who was placed in the world only that he might do good, and not evil; to honor God and save his own soul?

4th Point. Venial sin wounds and disfigures the soul; it tarnishes its lustre and beauty; it obscures the understanding, weakens the will, rouses the passions, inflames concupiscence; takes from it the fear of God, disrobes it of his presence, chills

its love; renders it weak and languishing, and deprives it of all relish for devotion. What wonder, then, that being reduced to this state, it should fall into great sins; that God now treats it with more coldness, and the devil tempts it with greater power?

For a thoughtless act of curiosity Lot's wife was transformed into a pillar of salt. Those two great servants of God, Moses and Aaron, were hindered, by a little want of faith, from entering into the promised land. Fifty thousand Bethsamites were struck dead for having regarded the Ark with a little curiosity. Seventy thousand persons were smitten and died with the plague, in consequence of the vainglory of King David. One of the greatest saints on earth, should he die in venial sin, could not enter into heaven until he had expiated it in the fire of purgatory, the pain of which surpasses all the torments of this life. Can you still imagine that venial sin is nothing? Can you still make it a jest, and derive amusement from it?

Oh, my God! I little knew how great an evil venial sin is. I did not believe, up to the present time, that it could dishonor Thee in such a manner; that it could wound thy divine perfections, grieve thy holy spirit, and outrage in a manner thy infinite goodness; that it could offend Thee as King, as Father, and as Spouse; disfigure my soul, disorder its actions, weaken its strength, while it augments that of its enemy, and causes it to incur the peril of eternally losing thy grace, by the commission of mortal sin. Oh, God of all goodness! I have offended Thee. Oh, God of majesty, I have despised Thee! Oh, God of consolation! I have afflicted Thee!

Oh, my soul! in what state are you? Are you living, or dead? Oh, you are luke-warm! you are dying! Enter into yourself. Fear the anger of God! Avoid little faults if you do not wish to fall into greater ones. Never esteem as little that which afflicts the Spirit of God, and which may be the first step towards hell.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." *Ephesians*, iv.

"But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it in the day of judgment." *St. Matt.* xii.

"Of one spark cometh a great fire." *Ecclesiasticus*, xi.

"Well done, good and faithful servant: because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." *St. Matt.* xxv.

TWENTIETH SATURDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE WORDS, "UNLESS YOU SEE SIGNS AND WONDERS, YOU BELIEVE NOT."

1st Point. Reason is the light of man; faith that of the Christian. To be a man it is necessary to have reason; to be a Christian it is necessary to have faith. God desires to be honored by the mind of man as well as by his heart. The heart of man honors God when it submits to his law; the mind of man honors God when it submits to faith. His mind submits perfectly when it believes that which it does not understand; his heart submits entirely when it does that which is contrary and displeasing to its natural desires.

2d Point. Am I a rational being? am I a Christian? am I governed by reason? am I governed by faith? Alas! I am like a brute, because I am governed only by the senses; I believe nothing unless I see it, feel it, touch it; if I am not sensible of the presence of God within me, I believe Him far away from me; if I taste not the consolation of his presence in my devotions, I abandon them, or say them with coldness, and without fervor.

3d Point. Faith consecrates the mind of man, and directs all his thoughts to religion; it makes him submissive to the authority of God, and finally conducts him to glory; it unites him with divine wisdom; it enlightens him with the pure light of truth; it renders him as right, certain, and infallible as God himself, because he is governed by his Holy Spirit, and believes only what He has revealed and taught. That faith is not divine which believes only what it sees and touches; such faith is, at least, doubtful and imperfect. Faith is a divine light, which shines in darkness and hides itself in the broad daylight. If, therefore, I depend only on the senses whereby to believe, I live like a beast; if on reason, I live as a mere man; if on faith, I live as a Christian.

4th Point. The just live by faith; it is necessary, then, to act by faith to be just; it is necessary to judge of things by the light of faith, and not by that of the senses and human prudence; it is necessary to esteem things according to the rules of faith, and not of the world. We must love what the world hates.

What does faith say to the grandeur of the world? That it is an abomination before God. What of its riches? That it is impossible for those who love them passionately to be saved; and

that it is difficult to possess them without loving them. What of its pleasures? That those who have their consolations in this world shall not have them in the next; to be a Christian, it is necessary to crucify the flesh; that he who lives according to the flesh cannot please God; and that one suffers the torments of hell in proportion as they have partaken of and enjoyed the pleasures of this life.

Do you believe these truths? If you do not, you are no Christian. If you believe them, why do you lead a life contrary to your belief? You believe that it is necessary to become as a little child to enter the kingdom of heaven, and yet you desire to be great, and are ambitious of honors! You believe that riches are accursed by God, and yet you desire them! You believe that poverty is the happiest state, and yet you wish not to be poor! You believe there is nothing better or more salutary for the soul than suffering, and yet you murmur when God afflicts you! You seek only after pleasures, enjoyment, good cheer, and gratification of the senses. Will there be any need of a judge to accuse you in the day of judgment? St. John says, "He who believes not is already judged; and he who believes, and yet lives contrary to his belief, is already condemned."

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Behold, he that is unbelieving, his soul shall not be right in himself: but the just shall live in his faith." *Habacuc*, ii.

"For we walk by faith and not by sight." 2 *Corinthians*, v.

"The just man liveth by faith." *Romans*, i.

"But woe to you that are rich: for you have your consolation." *St. Luke*, vi.

"Then Jesus said to his disciples: Amen, I say to you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven." *St. Matt.* xix.

"And again I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." *Ibid.*

"They who are of the flesh cannot please God." *Romans*, viii

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE GOSPEL. *Matt* xviii. 23–35.

"At that time, Jesus spoke to his disciples this parable: The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king, who would take an account of his servants. And when he had begun to take the account, one was brought to him, that owed him ten thousand talents. And as he had not wherewith to pay it, his lord commanded that he should be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. But that servant falling down, besought him, saying: Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And the lord of that servant, being moved with compassion, let him go, and forgave him the debt. But when that servant was gone out, he found one of his fellow-servants that owed him a hundred pence, and laying hold of him, he throttled him, saying: Pay what thou owest. And his fellow-servant, falling down, besought him, saying: Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. Now his fellow-servants seeing what was done, were very much grieved: and they came, and told their lord all that was done. Then his lord called him, and said to him: Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all the debt, because thou besoughtest me. Shouldst not thou then have had compassion also on thy fellow-servant, even as I had compassion on thee? And his lord being angry, delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all the debt. So also shall my heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts."

Meditation.

ON THE GOSPEL.

1ST POINT. The king who commanded his servants to render unto him an account of their stewardships signifies God, from whom we have received all the goods of nature and grace, whereby to honor Him in this world, to serve Him, love Him, labor for his glory, keep his commandments and do his will. How many have you received from Him? What use have you made of them? For what purpose have you employed your memory, judgment, goods, credit, authority, strength, beauty, science, eloquence, and the other treasures entrusted to you? What profit have you derived from so many graces, so much knowledge, so

many inspirations, from so many good impulses, so many confessions, so many communions, so many sermons, so many prayers, and so many meditations?

2d Point. Ten thousand talents make an immense sum. Contrast the value and multitude of the graces that God has bestowed on us, with the infinite number of our sins, and the horrible punishment due them! They are called debts because by them we have violated our obligations, and owe penance to God either in this world or the next. Oh, how many sins have you not committed in this life! oh, how often has not God forgiven you! How often have you not promised to satisfy Him, and change your life! and notwithstanding, you have done nothing!

What account will you render to the justice of God? How can you satisfy Him? Only in your heart by penance; and in the wounds of Jesus Christ by confidence in his merits.

3d Point. The first sound that will salute your trembling soul after death, will be these horrible words: "*Render unto me an account of thy stewardship.*" Then, as at the last judgment, the books will be opened. They will examine your bills and receipts; the talents that you have received, and the use you have applied them too. They will behold the frightful number of the sins which you have committed. They will demand a strict account of all, even an idle word. What will you then do? What will you answer? How will you defend yourself? Put then your affairs in order, defer not this important affair until death shall overtake you, when there will be no time to retrieve the past or provide for the future. God is at present, for us, a God of mercy and consolation; then, He will be a God of justice and vengeance. Imitate the wicked servant in the good, and not in the evil he has done.*

TWENTY-FIRST MONDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME GOSPEL.

1st Point. The servant, finding himself in a ruined state, and on the point of being thrown into prison, cast himself down at the feet of his lord, and thus humbled before him, acknowledged his debt, confessed his insolvency, conjured him to grant him a

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

little time, and promised to make satisfaction. It is in this way that we must do penance for our sins. First, it is necessary to acknowledge ourselves sinners, loaded with infinite debts, and incapable of satisfying divine justice for the least one of them; secondly, it is necessary to humble ourselves before God, throw ourselves at his feet with sincere sentiments of grief and confusion; thirdly, it is necessary to implore of Him pardon, grace, and mercy, with the hope of obtaining from his infinite goodness, an answer to our petition; fourthly, it is necessary to conjure Him, by the merits of his Son, to have patience with us; grant us a little time, and much grace, to acquit ourselves of our debts. Then it is necessary to promise Him to repair the past and work more faithfully for the future; to do penance to expiate our sins, by a sincere sorrow for them, and frequent confessions; above all, to do good works to repair the evil we may have done, and to satisfy the justice of God. Is this the way you do penance? are you resolved to do it? For what do you wait? It cannot be that you are deferring it until you come to die, when you will be in no condition to think of God or of yourself.

2D POINT. The king, touched with compassion, restored him to liberty, and remitted to him all his debts! Oh goodness of our God! which remits infinite sins to the soul which humbles itself before Him and implores forgiveness. This servant only prayed for time wherein to cancel his obligations, and his lord forgave him all the debt, and that, simply because he prayed for mercy. It is thus that God comports himself towards us? He grants us infinitely more than we ask for, provided we have acknowledged our guilt, humbled ourselves before Him, and prayed unto Him from the depths of our heart, with a sincere resolution to serve Him better and more faithfully. But, Lord, Thou knowest that this servant, to whom Thou hast given so much, will abuse thy gifts! No matter; God never remits sin to a penitent soul except through pure and infinite mercy, and his knowledge of the future does not cause Him to withhold it. Is it, then, just to refuse absolution to penitents on the simple doubt that they may fall again into their sins?

3D POINT. "*Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.*" It is necessary that God should have much patience with us, who offend Him continually, who repay his blessings with ingratitude, who fall incessantly into sin, who serve Him with so much lukewarmness and indifference, and who, when we wish to abandon Him, say: "Lord, have patience with me." But what is so astonishing, we desire to suffer nothing for Him. He says sweetly to you in

your pains, your afflictions, your aridities, your desolations, your infirmities, your sicknesses, and in the ill treatment you receive from your neighbor, Have patience. Suffer this for me. I will reward you magnificently in the world to come; and yet you do nothing for Him, but murmur continually against Him; call in question his providence, and accuse Him of injustice! Oh, do you not fear the chastisement of the bad servant?

4TH POINT. When he had left the presence of this clement master who had forgiven him so large a debt, he met one of his companions, who owed him a hundred pence; and, refusing to be touched by his tears or prayers, he threw him into prison. The king, having learned this from his people, called him, and after having justly reproached him with his ingratitude, he delivered him to the torturers who cast him into prison. All our sins and relapses arise from this: when we retire from the presence of God, we forget his benefits. How cruel in this wicked servant to treat his brother so harshly and unmercifully, for a sum which was as nothing compared to the one just remitted to him! What do you owe God? Infinite debts. What does your neighbor owe you? Nothing in comparison. God remits to you all your debts, on condition that you show grace to your neighbor; and yet you are hard on him, wish to suffer nothing from him, and exact all that he owes you with rigor. Ah, miserable one that you are! behold, the angels go and lay their complaints before God, which, moving Him to just anger, He will revoke the grace that He has shown you, and punish you for pardoned sins as if they had not been pardoned; He will then deliver you over to devils, who will cast you into a prison from whence you will never be liberated, being insolvent, and that because of your ingratitude to God and your inhumanity towards your brother. Oh, I will then be patient with him, that God may be patient with me; I will forgive him his little debts, that God may remit mine which are infinite; and I will pardon him all, that God may in the end pardon me all.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"If He examine on a sudden, who shall answer Him? or who can say: Why doest Thou so?" *Job*, ix.

"If Thou, O Lord, wilt mark iniquities, Lord who shall stand it?" *Psalm* cxxix.

"I went and hid thy talent in the earth." *St. Matt.* xxv.

"Take ye away, therefore, the talent from him, and give it to him that hath ten talents." *Ibid.*

"Give me an account of thy stewardship." *St. Luke*, xvi.

"I have acknowledged my sin to thee, and my injustice I have not concealed. I said I will confess against myself my injustice to the Lord; and Thou hast forgiven the wickedness of my sin." *Psalm* xxxi.

TWENTY-FIRST TUESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

1st Point. God is before me, He is with me, He is in me. He is before me, to take note of my ways; He is with me, to guide and govern me; He is in me, to sustain and animate me. I ought, then, to be always before God, with God, and in God. Before God, considering only Him; with God, working only for Him; in God, finding repose only in Him.

2d Point. In whatsoever place I may be, I am never alone, for God is present with me; in whatsoever labors I am engaged in, I work not alone, for God works with me; whatsoever griefs I suffer, I suffer not alone, for God himself sustains me, and helps me to carry my cross. Oh my God! is it possible that Thou art always thinking of me, and I never think of Thee? that Thou art always with me, and I am never with Thee? that Thou shouldst always work for me, and I never work for Thee? I am in Thee as in a Paradise, and Thou art in me as in a hell, where Thou seest only crimes, and hearest only blasphemies! Oh my God! from henceforth I will, by thy grace, change my life, that Thou mayest dwell in me as in a Paradise, where Thou shalt behold only good actions, and hear only thy praises.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Lord, Thou hast proved me, and known me: Thou hast known my sitting down, and my rising up. Thou hast understood my thoughts afar off: my path and my line Thou hast searched out." *Psalm* cxxxviii.

"Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy face? If I ascend into heaven, Thou art there; if I descend into hell, Thou art present." *Ibid.*

"But Thou, O Lord, art among us, and thy name is called upon us." *Isaias*, xiv.

"For in Him we live, and we move, and we are." *Acts*, xvii.

TWENTY-FIRST WEDNESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THESE WORDS, "SO ALSO SHALL MY HEAVENLY FATHER DO TO YOU, IF YOU FORGIVE NOT EVERY ONE HIS BROTHER FROM YOUR HEARTS."

1st Point. God commands you to forgive: will you obey Him? If one in authority, on whom your worldly interests depended, ordered you to do so, would you disobey him? Who has so high an authority, or so great a right to command you as God? Are you his servant if you wish to do only what pleases yourself? Is it not by the performance of difficult things that one shows his love and obedience? The pleasure of the servant ought to yield to that of his master.

2d Point. That which God forbids you, He forbids to all men; that which He commands you to do, He likewise commands to all men. As He forbids you to hate your enemies, so also He forbids them to hate you; as He commands you to love all men, so also He commands all men to love you; and will damn eternally all who disobey Him. Is there any thing more just than this commandment?

3d Point. God commands you as king, pleads with you as father, gives you an example as master. What has He not suffered for you? how patiently has He not borne with you? In one hand He holds patience, in the other vengeance; one is infinitely dear to Him, the other is necessary to Him; He has to avenge himself because He is just; He desires to bear patiently with us because He is amiable. Oh, charity of my God! He abandons vengeance to preserve patience; He renounces one to satisfy the other, and you abandon patience to exercise vengeance! God pardons with joy, and punishes with regret; He pardons through inclination, and punishes through necessity. If we are subjects, let us obey our king; if we are children, do the will of our father; if we are disciples, follow the example of our master.*

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

TWENTY FIRST THURSDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

OTHER REASONS WHY WE SHOULD FORGIVE OUR ENEMIES.

1st Point. Why do you hate your brother? Is he not your fellow-man? is he not, like yourself, a child of God? is he not a Christian, and a member of the same fold of Jesus Christ with you? is he not purchased with the same blood, baptized in the same Church, nourished by the same sacraments, and called to the same glory as yourself? If you hate him because he is a sinner, you must hate all men, because there are none exempt from sin. Are you? Who is not at liberty to hate you on this ground? Were you righteous when Jesus loved you? Where would you be, what would be your hope, if Jesus had not loved sinners?

2d Point. They despise you: you merit it. Will they also despise eternal punishments? They deprive you of your goods; who has permitted it? Is it not God? Has He not a right to recall what He has loaned, when He pleases, and through whom He pleases? Regard not him as an enemy who helps you to win merit and gain heaven. Revenge not yourself on him for whom God has reserved vengeance; leave him then with God, who will defend and avenge your cause, and punish him eternally, unless he makes satisfaction for the evil he has done you. Suffering is a punishment due the sinner; vengeance is a right which belongs to God.

3d Point. God furnishes you with a rule of mercy; you furnish God with a rule of justice. If you do not show mercy unto others as He has shown it unto you, He will take vengeance on you, even as you have done it unto others. If you love those who hate you, God will love you; if you hate your enemy, God will hate you; if you condemn him, God will condemn you; if you excuse him, God will excuse you; if you pardon him, God will pardon you; if you punish him, God will punish you.

Oh, sweet and merciful Jesus, when I behold Thee dying on the cross for thy enemies, I no longer feel the outrages inflicted on me by mine. When I hear Thee pray for those who put Thee to death, I am inspired with pity for those who have attacked and sought to deprive me of my honor and goods. My Father, pardon them, for they know not what they do! They see not the evil they do themselves, and I know that I have merited their ill-

treatment by my sins. They are not conscious of the wickedness of their designs, or they would at once abandon them. Enlighten them, oh merciful Jesus, and give me grace to forgive them from my heart, for the evils they have done me.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you. Bless them that curse you, and pray for them that calumniate you. . . . Judge not, and you shall not be judged: condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you shall be forgiven. . . . For with the same measure that you shall mete withal, it shall be measured to you again." *St. Luke*, vi.

"For if you forgive men their offences, your heavenly Father will forgive you also your offences." *St. Matt.* vi.

"But if you will not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive your offences." *Ibid.*

"Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors." *Ibid.*

TWENTY-FIRST FRIDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

OTHER MOTIVES OF PATIENCE.

(See Sixth Wednesday after Easter, page 332.)

TWENTY-FIRST SATURDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Meditation.

OTHER MOTIVES OF PATIENCE.

(See Sixth Thursday after Easter, page 324.)

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE GOSPEL. *St. Matt.* xxii. 15–21.

"At that time, the Pharisees, going, consulted among themselves how to ensnare Jesus in his speech. And they send to Him their disciples, with the Herodians, saying: Master, we know that Thou art a true speaker, and teachest the way of God

in truth, neither carest Thou for any man: Thou dost not regard the person of men. Tell us, therefore, what Thou dost think: is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not? But Jesus, knowing their wickedness, said: Why do ye tempt me, ye hypocrites? Show me the coin of the tribute. And they offered Him a penny. And Jesus saith to them: Whose image and inscription in this? They say to Him, Cæsar's. Then He saith to them: Render, therefore, unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

Meditation.

ON THE GOSPEL.

1st Point. It was their design to ensnare our Lord. Oh the malice and blindness of men! What malice to lay a snare for a God! what blindness to imagine themselves endowed with power to effect their object! Oh, how many there are in the world who conspire against Jesus. Alas! how few there are who unite themselves together to defend his interests, work for his glory, and extend his empire. Christian soul, unite yourself with some holy society against the wicked, to defend Jesus, and give battle to his enemies; above all, do good, in order to receive Him this day into your heart. Behold, the Spouse approaches; He desires to abide in your house and eat with you. Oh what an honor and consolation! What return can you make Him? Is the hall ready? is it well prepared?

2d Point. "*Master, we know that Thou art a true speaker.*" God has given us his only Son to instruct us; the devil presents to us the world, to seduce and deceive us. Jesus is truth, and all his maxims are eternal truths; the world is an impostor, all its maxims are falsehoods, errors, and heresies. Jesus teaches us the way of salvation; the world, the way to perdition. Ah, then, why believe the world in preference to Jesus Christ? why rather follow the maxims of the world than the truths of faith? You declare yourself a disciple of Jesus Christ. Oh wicked disciple! you believe not his words nor obey his commands. If He declares the truth, why do you not believe Him? and if you believe, why do you not obey?

3d Point. "*Why do ye tempt me, ye hypocrites?*" Hypocrites tempted our Lord. They wished to prove his wisdom, to ascertain if He could penetrate the secret thought of their heart, and if it was possible to deceive and ensnare Him. Alas! there are hypocrites

still on earth; many false devotees, who, under a beautiful appearance of piety, are devoid of truth and charity; and who, while they converse like angels, live like devils. Remember the anathema that the Son of God pronounced against hypocrites, and endeavor to live in such a manner that your interior will correspond with your exterior life, your faith with your works, and your heart with your words.*

TWENTY-SECOND MONDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME GOSPEL.

1st Point. "*Whose image and inscription is this?*" We are all formed to the image of God, and are bound to conform to our divine original. Thus we ought to imitate God in his holiness, in his perfection, in his charity, in his sweetness, patience, purity, justice, and mercy. Do you imitate this divine example? at least do you endeavor to do so? Do we see in your life and your actions any traits of the holiness of God? Whose image do you bear? Alas, it is not that of God but of the devil. You are like him, haughty, malicious, passionate, and vindictive; you have disfigured the image of God, and there is no longer a trace of Him in your countenance.

2d Point. "*Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's.*" Persons find no difficulty in rendering unto Cæsar the things that are his, but who renders freely to God the tribute which is his due? Unto Him do we owe all, because He has given all. Our mind owes Him the tribute of submission and obedience in matters of faith, and it should pay Him by believing, without question, those points which it cannot understand. Our heart owes Him a tribute of love, He being our sovereign good, and it should pay Him by charity; loving those things which are contrary to, and displeasing to its inclinations. Our natural faculties owe Him a tribute of confidence, as to a most wise, most powerful, and most perfect Father. They should pay Him by hope, in doing by his grace that which they cannot effect by their own strength. Our senses owe Him a tribute of suffering, as to a most equitable judge who is obliged to punish their irregularities. They should pay Him by suffering

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

patiently those things which are most painful and difficult to endure, and by enduring, with submission to the divine will, whatever is displeasing to nature.

3d Point. Render to God the honor and obedience due Him. He declares that glory is his due. He accords unto us the merit of our good works, but reserves the glory thereof for himself. Abstain from touching this forbidden fruit, for it will bring you death. Imitate the ancients of the Apocalypse, who "*fell before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints.*" Offer Him the sweet and acceptable perfume of prayer. How do you pray? Your prayers are not like a perfume whose odor is agreeable to God, and which attracts his graces to your soul; but resembles more an exhalation which ascends on high, producing clouds and lightning of wrath. Sing with the angels this beautiful canticle of love: "*The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power, and divinity, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and benediction.*"

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"There is no wisdom, there is no prudence, there is no counsel against the Lord." *Proverbs*, xxi.

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the prudence of the prudent I will reject." 1 *Corinthians*, i.

"But if I say the truth, you believe me not." *St. John*, viii.

"Render, therefore, to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due: custom to whom custom: fear to whom fear: honor to whom honor." *Romans*, xiii.

"Stripping yourself of the old man with his deeds, and putting on the new, him who is renewed unto knowledge, according to the image of Him who created him." *Colossians*, iii.

"And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice: If any man shall adore the beast, and his image, and receive his mark on his forehead, or in his hand: He shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God." *Apocalypse*, xiv.

TWENTY-SECOND TUESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THESE WORDS: "WHOSE IMAGE AND INSCRIPTION IS THIS?"

On the Imitation of Jesus Christ.

1st Point. It is necessary for us to believe all that Jesus Christ has said. It is necessary for us to follow his example in all that we do. He is the model on which we should form our lives; his doctrine is the rule of our faith, and his example the rule of our conduct; his words are infallible; his actions impeccable. I am a heretic in spirit if I do not believe what He declares; a heretic at heart if I do not imitate his life.

2d Point. I shall become perfect if I imitate Jesus, who is the rule of my perfection. I shall be very near to God if I am like unto Jesus, for He loves those who resemble his Son. I render obedience to God by imitating Jesus, for He commands us so to do. I shall love God if I imitate Jesus, for I can do nothing that would be more agreeable to Him. I shall be saved if I imitate Jesus, because all the predestined are like Him, and walk in his footsteps even unto death.

3d Point. Oh, what an honor to resemble a God, to live like a God, to suffer and die like a God! Is this the example that you imitate? Is this the model by which your works are executed? When you converse, act, or suffer, do you say: Is it thus Jesus would speak? would He act thus? is it thus He would suffer? My God, what an example! My God, what a model!

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Look, and make it according to the pattern that was shown thee on the mount." *Exodus*, xxv.

"He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself to walk even as He walked." 1 *St. John*, ii.

"For as I have given you an example, that as I have done, so you do also." *St. John*, xiii.

"But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." *Romans*, xiii.

TWENTY-SECOND WEDNESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON SIMPLICITY OR SINGLENESS OF HEART.

1st Point. Christian soul, do all things with an eye single to the glory of God. Aspire to a true simplicity of heart and mind. To attain this end, make God the only object and thought of your soul, and a desire to do his holy will the ruling principle of your mind. He is the source and perfection of all truth. He has had but one thought and one love from all eternity. Imitate Him, that you may arrive at that unity to which charity tends.

2d Point. Of what use are so many thoughts, and such a multiplicity of argument? Are you not convinced of the truth of the maxims of the Gospel? If you are convinced, why then continue to seek for what you have already found? Why do you not practise all that you know? Can you have a more beautiful subject of prayer than God, who beholds you, who hears you, and who is in the depths of your soul? Cast yourself into this ocean; lose yourself in this abyss. You will find all in God. Out of Him you will find nothing.

"*Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and art troubled about many things.*"* Is it not wholly unprofitable to be thus troubled? Are so many cares necessary to a soul which desires only God? "*But one thing is necessary. Mary hath chosen the best part.*" She listens without speaking, rests without inquietude, and esteems herself truly happy to be at the feet of Jesus, who instructs and consoles her. Withdraw yourself, Christian soul, from this embarrassment and confusion of thought. Avoid multiplicity, and tend to unity. But one thing is necessary, and that only can content and satisfy you.

3d Point. To have only one thought it is necessary to have but one desire. To divest one's self of all other thoughts, it is necessary to banish all desires, except that thought and that desire whose only aim is God. Without simplicity of heart you will never arrive at simplicity of mind. You will be attracted by a thousand things, and fix your attention on none. You suffer yourself to be controlled by your inclination, and yet complain of having distractions in prayer? Are your complaints reasonable? Is there not double dealing in your heart? Alas! with what

* St. Luke, x.

avidity it pursues its treasure, and delights itself with what it loves! If it does not find its pleasures in God, it is an unmistakable sign that it does not love Him.

You are not the master of your mind, it is true; but are you not master of your heart? You cannot be without thoughts, but can you not be without desires? You will be troubled but little by bad thoughts, if you have no bad desires.*

TWENTY-SECOND THURSDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Meditation.

MEANS TO ARRIVE AT SIMPLICITY OF HEART AND MIND.

1st Point. Retire within your own heart, close the door, and you will find therein all that you love and desire. No matter what clamor human reason makes without, be careful not to give it admittance. If you cannot silence it, pay no further attention to it, and do not allow it to disturb you. Remain quiet in your place of rest. Envelope yourself in your poverty and humility. Having God in your heart, why should you seek for aught else? He is there although you may not sensibly feel his presence. Is not faith more certain than reason? It is better to love than to reason; better to enjoy than to desire. You will enjoy your well-beloved only when you love Him without desiring any thing besides.

2d Point. My soul, you will never find true happiness until you are willing to content yourself only with God, seek only his glory, and correspond only with his desires. Then you shall be in prayer like a rock to its centre, a flame to its sphere, a stream to its ocean, and the needle to its pole. Oh, my God! my peace, my rest, my joy! what is it that I desire? what is it that I seek? for what do I wait? Alas! I am in continual motion, while I seek only repose. I am at war with my fears and desires, with my reason and passions, while I desire only peace. Between my spirit and flesh there arises a rebellion of the inferior part against the superior; of my spirit against thy law; and yet I dare complain, because I know not peace. Ah, what peace can that soul enjoy who obeys Thee not, and seeks some other good than Thee?

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

3d Point. I am weary of labor, and henceforth desire to rest. So many arguments weary me; all my desires disquiet me. So much knowledge serves only to perplex and distract me. Casting out all fear, I desire only to begin to love Thee. Go, my soul, enter into your place of rest, and taste in silence how sweet the Lord is. Abandon the multiplicity of thoughts and desires which oppress you, and content yourself with saying to God, who dwelleth in you according to his heart: My God, I offer Thee with joy, and in the simplicity of my heart, all that I desire or possess in the world. Accept the sacrifice I offer Thee of my mind and my heart, and rest sweetly in me, as I desire to rest eternally in Thee.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"The simplicity of the just shall guide them." *Proverbs*, xi.

"If thy eye be single, thy whole body will be lightsome." *St. Matt.* vi.

"Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and art troubled about many things. But one thing is necessary." *St. Luke*, x.

"Think of the Lord in goodness, and seek Him in simplicity of heart." *Wisdom*, i.

TWENTY-SECOND FRIDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE INCOMPREHENSIBILITY OF GOD, AND HOW WE SHOULD HONOR HIM.

1st Point. Who is this God to whose image you are made? He is a King, who is incomprehensible at all times, in all places, to all minds, and to all hearts. All time shall never measure his duration. All places cannot contain his immensity. All minds can never comprehend his greatness. All hearts can never sufficiently love his goodness.

2d Point. God is nothing of all that we see; He is nothing of all that we feel; He is nothing of all that we comprehend; He is nothing of all that we imagine. He is all, and He is nothing. All, because He is in all beings; nothing, because all beings are in Him, in a manner different from that in which they are in themselves. God is an invisible being, inaccessible, immutable, and incomprehensible. Invisible, yet seeing all; inaccessible, yet embracing all; immutable, yet changing all; incomprehensible, yet comprehending all.

3d. Point. I honor the power of God by the sacrifice of my own strength; I honor the greatness of God by the sacrifice of my own glory; I honor the goodness of God by the sacrifice of my own desires; I honor the incomprehensibility of God by the sacrifice of my own thoughts and understanding.

Oh, my God, and my all! I am rich, indeed, when I have only Thee; I am truly learned when I know only Thee; I am perfectly contented when I taste only Thee. I see all, when I see nothing; I taste all, when I taste nothing; I possess all, when I possess nothing.

Divest your memory of its image, and God will fill it with his being; divest your heart of its cares and afflictions, and God will fill it with his consolations; divest your mind of the inspirations of human reason, and God will fill it with the divine inspirations of his grace.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"To whom have you likened me, and made me equal, and compared me, and made me like?" *Isaias*, xlvi.

"My soul refused to be comforted: I remembered God and was delighted." *Psalm* lxxvi.

"All my bones shall say: Lord, who is like to Thee?" *Psalm* xxxiv.

TWENTY-SECOND SATURDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON CONFORMITY WITH GOD, OF WHOM WE ARE THE IMAGE.

1st Point. Make yourselves like unto God by seeking that wisdom which proceedeth from Him alone, and which "*is chaste, peaceable, modest, consenting to good, full of mercy and good works, without judging and without dissimulation.*"* An exterior always composed and modest is the mark of a soul which has arrived at the height of perfection, and is victorious over its passions. God is the centre and source of all peace; his presence calms and tranquilizes the soul that He animates, while He imprints a divine modesty upon it, the sign, as it were, of his complacency. He takes great delight in modesty and chastity. He loves to take up his abode with those who practise those heavenly virtues, and regards them as his house of refuge, the temple of

* St. James, iii.

his Spirit, and the sanctuary of his grace, since therein all is peace and order. The lustre of a holy and modest soul is reflected on its exterior. It is by the outward man that we judge of the inner one.

2D POINT. A constrained and affected modesty cannot be supported for any length of time, the veil of hypocrisy being so transparent as to betray the vices which it seeks to hide. When a soul is tranquil and at peace, according to the wisdom of God, its exterior is modest at all times. When a clock is irregular we judge it to be out of order. A body ever agitated by restlessness, and obedient to every impulse, is the sign of a soul which abandons itself to its fears and desires, which is staggered by temptation, and unable to resist pain. A soul which is conformed to God is without agitation or motion, it reposes in Him as in its centre, and finds therein a fullness of peace which passeth all human understanding.

Oh, my God, my Creator! thy spirit is sweet, and mine is violent; thy spirit is wise, and mine is hasty; thy spirit is tranquil, and mine is restless; thy spirit is grave, and mine is frivolous and vain. Possess me, oh Lord, body and soul, that I may honor Thee in all things, and be fully conformed to thy image.

3D POINT. Keep watch over your body, dear Christian and God will guard your soul. Compose yourself exteriorly, and He will compose you interiorly. Keep the outside in order, and He will protect that which is within. Watch over your senses, and He will watch over your heart. Do all that depends on yourself, and be assured that He will accomplish those things in you which depend on Him. If you are evil, at least forbear to be scandalous. Conceal the vices of your soul, lest you add to your criminality by leading others astray, and in humble penitence seek peace with God.

Woe unto you hypocrites who desire to appear before men what ye are not! Woe unto you who give scandal by appearing, without shame, what you are! To avoid hypocrisy be in truth what you appear; honor God by the modesty of your body and soul; and since He cannot remain where there is confusion and disorder, hold both always in order by modesty and peace.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"A man is known by his look: and a wise man when thou meetest him, is known by his countenance." *Ecclesiasticus*, xix.

"Let your modesty be known to all men." *Philippians*, iv.

"But the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptibility of a

quiet and meek spirit which is rich in the sight of God." *St. 1 Peter*, iii.

"Now I Paul myself beseech you, by the meekness and modesty of Christ." 2 *Corinthians*, x.

"Put ye on therefore, as the elect of God, holy, and beloved, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, and patience," *Colossians*, iii.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE GOSPEL. *St. Matt*, ix. 18–26.

"At that time, as Jesus was speaking to the multitude: Behold, a certain ruler came, and adored Him, saying: Lord, my daughter is just now dead: but come, lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. And Jesus rising up, followed him with his disciples. And behold, a woman, who was troubled with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment. For she said, within herself: If I shall but touch his garment, I shall be healed. But Jesus turning about, and seeing her, said: Take courage, daughter: thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour. And when Jesus came into the house of the ruler, and saw the minstrels and the crowd making a rout, he said: Give place: for the girl is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed at Him. And when the crowd was turned out, He went in, and took her by the hand: and the girl arose. And the fame hereof went abroad into all that country."

Meditation.

ON THE GOSPEL.

1ST POINT. A ruler of the synagogue having lost his daughter sought Jesus Christ, for the purpose of imploring Him to come and restore her to life. Afflictions are designed to direct our thoughts to God, and make us have recourse to Him. It is for this end that He visits you with so many afflictions. Notwithstanding this merciful design, you have not had recourse to prayer. You do not go out to seek Jesus Christ, nor do you invite Him into your house. This is the reason, perhaps, why you are not delivered from tribulation.

2D POINT. The daughter of this ruler, was only twelve years of age. Death, you see, spares no one. It lays low the young

as well as the old. If you are aged, take care, death is at your door, he knocks by infirmities, and will soon enter. If you are young, death is in all your paths, and sets a snare for you whithersoever you turn. Whether old, middle aged, or young, be prepared, and distrust an enemy who lies in wait for you at all times and in all places.

God takes little children out of the world for innumerable reasons, among others, to punish the parents who have made idols of them, and to save the children, who would otherwise perish eternally. He who afflicts himself with excessive grief for the death of parents or friends, shows that he is not firm in the law, and that he doubts somewhat the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. He believes not in Providence, or at the best, considers the chastisement unmerited and unjust. But if this want of faith is exhibited by one who indulges in excessive grief for parents, or those who are very near to them, what are we to think of those who abandon themselves to sadness, grief, and despair, for losses of less consequence?

3d Point. The father invited our Lord to come to his house, and although he was wanting in faith, since he did not believe that He could raise his dead child to life without going to her, Jesus, gained by his prayers and tears of humility, arose from the place where He was, discontinued his discourse, and accompanied him. Oh, He will also come willingly with you to-day, if you invite Him with fervor and humility, saying: Lord, behold, my soul is dead, at least, it is sick unto death; come soon, I implore Thee, place thy hand on it, and restore it to health and life.

4th Point. On the way, behold a woman who had been troubled with an issue of blood twelve years, who had expended all she had in purchasing remedies during that time, which had afforded no relief, met Him, and casting herself, all feeble as she was, to the earth, touched the hem of his garment, and was cured. Admire the faith of this afflicted woman. Consider her fervor, which led her to press through the crowd to approach Him. Behold her humility, which inspired her to kneel behind our Lord, not daring to speak, or present herself before Him, but only to touch the hem of his garment. Mark how her profound reverence for the Son of God made her tremble when He turned towards her, and asked who it was who had touched Him; and her sincerity in acknowledging what she had done, although she feared that He would punish her for her temerity.

Oh, my soul, approach Jesus, and do not be afraid to touch his sacred wounds; make known your maladies to Him, with an as-

sured faith that He will cure you, provided you touch Him with faith and confidence. The virtue that imbued his vestments issued from his sacred body, which you are going to receive. If those who touch only the hem of his garment are healed of incurable diseases, what malady cannot be cured by his adorable flesh which you are about receiving into your heart! Oh, living and life-giving flesh of Jesus! heal the infirmities of mine. Oh, most holy and most pure of all hearts! imprint thine on mine, and render it pure and holy. Alas, why is it, that having so often touched Thee, I continue sick? It is because I fail to touch Thee with faith.*

TWENTY-THIRD MONDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME GOSPEL.

1st Point. It is never more necessary to hope than when all seems lost. When all human means fail, we have no refuge but God, and are compelled to fly to Him for succor. He often permits us to suffer with protracted and loathsome diseases for our own profit, to convince us that He alone is the Master of life and death, and to oblige us, like the afflicted woman in the Gospel, to address ourselves to him. Examine your affairs. Why is it that nothing rouses you? Is it not because you depend too much on your own strength, tact, and prudence? Why is it that, notwithstanding all your remedies, you are not cured? It is, perhaps, because you have more faith in your physicians than in God, and regard them as the arbiters of life and death, as if you supposed He had abandoned the government of his creatures, and could not cure you, or that they could do so without his gracious assistance!

2d Point. Jesus, having entered the house of the ruler, dispersed the crowd which, as usual on such occasions, had collected there for purposes of lamentation and condolence. "*Give place*," He said, "*the girl is not dead, but sleepeth.*" He called her death a sleep, because it was his design to raise her. Why are you afraid of death? Do you fear rest after labor? Do you not know that you will one day rise from the dead? Oh, when a Christian has lived for God he dies sweetly! He regards death as

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

a sleep which will deliver him from his cares and give him rest from his labors.

3D POINT. Jesus, with three of his disciples, entered the room where the maid was lying. He took her by the hand, and she arose, walked and eat. A soul risen by grace ought also to rise and walk. Action is a sign of life; inaction of death. If you are truly risen in Christ, you will practise good works, and have an insatiable hunger and thirst after righteousness. You are God's creature, you confess, and yet you do nothing for God! You are risen, and you wish not to eat! You pass entire months without communion! Alas! I fear that you are dead, or near unto death.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Man born of a woman, living for a short time, is filled with many miseries. Who cometh forth like a flower, and is destroyed, and fleeth as a shadow, and never continueth in the same state." *Job*, xiv.

"Whatsoever shall touch the flesh thereof (*the holocaust*) shall be sanctified." *Leviticus*, vi.

"And they besought Him that they might touch but the hem of his garment. And as many as touched were made whole." *Matthew*, xiv.

"Put not your trust in princes, in the children of men, in whom there is no salvation." *Psalm* cxlv.

"Go, my people, enter into thy chambers; shut thy doors upon thee; hide thyself a little for a moment, until the indignation passes away." *Isaias*, xxvi.

"Rise thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead: and Christ shall enlighten thee." *Ephesians.* v.

"And we will not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep, that you be not sorrowful, even as others who have no hope." 1 *Thessalonians*, iv.

TWENTY-THIRD TUESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE DEATH OF THE GOOD.

1ST POINT. It is believed that the ruler's daughter experienced many pangs in dying, because she was in the first bloom of youth, and in the fresh enjoyment of existence, because she dreaded the

separation from her father, who loved her tenderly, and felt unspeakably appalled at entering into an unknown region of error and darkness, the gates of heaven not being yet opened. Oh, death is sweet to those to whom life has been bitter! When one has found no pleasure in living, he finds it in dying! Separation is agreeable to those who do not love each other. If you do not love your body, you will feel no repugnance at leaving it. What reason have you to love it? What pleasure have you had on this earth? When have you taken a step without encountering a cross—or a mis-step, and finding yourself in continual danger of damnation?

2d Point. That which you inordinately loved during life will torment you at the hour of death; and that which tormented you during life, will be your consolation at death. What can grieve a soul that is not attached to this world? Love is stronger than death; it separates the soul from the body and all sensible things; it foresees its intentions and desires, and leaves it nothing to do. Oh, there is great joy in dying in the arms of Jesus, relying on his merits, consoled by the presence of his holy Mother, surrounded by angels, accompanied by the blessings of the poor, to whom you have shown mercy, and followed by your good works, which is the only treasure that we can take with us beyond the grave.

3d Point. There is nothing better in this life than a beautiful gate of exit from it. Death is not repulsive to him who has lived well; it is rather the object of his vows and desires; he regards it as the end of his conflicts, as the crown of his glory, as the entrance to the land of the living, and as a passage to eternal rest. God is faithful to those who are faithful to Him. Do not doubt for a moment that He will abandon in death those who have served Him faithfully in life. On the contrary, it is at this time that He holds them as the apple of his eye; He strengthens them with his grace, makes them rest on his bosom, assuages their grief, dissipates their fears, commands his angels to defend, console, assure, and receive their soul, and bear it to heaven. Oh, the death of the righteous is precious in the sight of God! Oh, the sacrifice they offer Him in life is honorable and agreeable to Him! Oh, sweet and merciful Jesus! can I hope to die a good death after having led so criminal a life? Yes; provided I recover by penance the loss that I have caused my innocence to sustain. Do penance; do it now while you have time and opportunity, for soon you will be deprived of both. Live the life of the righteous, that your death may be like theirs.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord." *Apocalypse*, xiv.

"With him that feareth the Lord, it shall go well in the latter end, and in the day of his death he shall be blessed." *Ecclesiasticus*, i.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." *Psalm* cxv.

"But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads: because your redemption is at hand." *St. Luke*, xxi.

"The Lord God shall wipe away tears from every face." *Isaios*, xxv.

TWENTY-THIRD WEDNESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

1st Point. It was by her faith that the poor woman in the Gospel was cured. Without it she could have obtained nothing from God; by it she obtained all that she desired. Are you astonished at this? She honored God infinitely by her hope and confidence in Him. He who hopes in God recognizes a Supreme Being endowed with infinite perfections; he allows himself to be governed by his wisdom, depends on his power, confides in his goodness, pays homage to his greatness, and relies on his providence.

2d Point. Hope makes man God-like; it lifts him from infirmity to strength, from poverty to riches, from misery to happiness. God gives, if we may so express ourselves, his subsistence to him who strips himself of his own; He gives his power to him who recognizes and feels his own weakness; He imparts his treasures to him who knows and understands his own poverty. There is never greater need to hope, than when all seems clouded by despair; never greater need to be less afraid, than when all things combine to make us fear; and never greater need to abandon ourselves entirely to God, than when we are apparently abandoned.

3d Point. Believing what we see is not a divine faith, but a human and natural one; hoping for what we can obtain is not a theological virtue, which lifts itself above nature; loving that which is sweet and agreeable is not a divine charity, but often the

mockery of self-love. Faith that is divine believes that which it does not understand; hope that is supernatural hopes for that which it cannot see; charity, to be pure, loves that which is displeasing to it. Believing in darkness, hoping in infirmity, loving in disgust and pain, is the life of a true Christian, and raises one above nature, uniting him immediately to God.*

TWENTY-THIRD THURSDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON OTHER MOTIVES FOR CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

1st Point. The full freely seeks the empty; abundance willingly unites itself to poverty; the strong are pleased with the feeble; the physician with his patient, and the nursing mother with her child. Depend not on your own strength, and God will sustain you; have no human subsistence, and God will give you one that is divine; renounce your own light, and the wisdom of God will govern you; strip yourself of all self-dependence, and the power of God will support you; empty yourself of self-will, and God will fill you with his holiness, his graces, and treasures.

2d Point. Oh, all-powerful God, what am I? and who art Thou? Thou art self-existant, I am only sheer nothingness; Thou art only strength, and I am only weakness; Thou art only truth, and I am only untruth; Thou art only light, and I am only darkness; Thou art only sanctity, and I am only malice. Oh my God, with Thee I am strong; without Thee I am nothing.

To know God, without knowing properly our own misery, makes us guilty of presumption; to know our own misery, without knowing God, makes us despair. It constitutes the felicity of the saints to know the abyss of the mercy of God. Jesus is not only God, but He is a God-Mediator, and a God-Saviour. Jesus would no longer be Jesus if deprived of the attribute of mercy. Jesus would be no longer Saviour, if He was divested of his tenderness for sinners.

3d Point. Oh my God! my hope! I abandon myself entirely to Thee. I lean on Thee, I rest on Thee. Having chosen Thee for my guide, I cast every care on Thee, knowing that Thou wilt be true to me unto the end.

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Who is this that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning upon her beloved?" *Cant.* viii.

"But they that hope in the Lord, shall renew their strength; they shall take wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint." *Isaias*, xl.

"And the Lord said to Gideon: The people that are with thee, are many: and Madian shall not be delivered into their hands; lest Israel should glory against me, and say: I was delivered by my own strength." *Judges*, vii.

"Charge the rich of this world not to be high-minded, nor to hope in uncertain riches, but in the living God (who giveth us abundantly all things to enjoy)." 1 *Timothy*, vi.

TWENTY-THIRD FRIDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON SOLITUDE.

1st Point. Jesus commanded all who were in the apartment to leave it, in order to execute his design of raising to life the ruler's daughter. It is a difficult matter to be at the same time with God and man. To enjoy the presence of our well-beloved, it is necessary to fly from the company of the world. The world makes too great a tumult around your heart; it prevents your hearing the word of God, and stifles his holy Spirit. God manifests himself only in the desert; it is there that He causes manna to fall from heaven; there that He gives his law, and renders his presence visible. It was in the desert that Jesus multiplied the loaves, and was transfigured before three of his disciples. It is in the solitude of the world, in the silence of the passions, and during the slumber of the senses, that the Spirit holds converse with the heart of his spouse.

2d Point. There are three sorts of solitude: that of the body, that of the mind, and that of the heart. You are solitary in body, when you have no other companion than God; solitary in mind, when you think only of God; solitary in heart, when you love only God. He visits you when you are solitary in body; speaks to you when you are solitary in mind; and fills you with himself when you are solitary in heart. Solitude of the body is nothing without that of the mind; solitude of the mind is impossible

without that of the heart. The first is good, the second better, the third the most perfect. It is the latter towards which the two first tend. How can your mind dwell in the desert if it holds converse with the world? How can you avoid thinking only of the pleasures of the world if your heart is attached thereto? Where the treasure is, there will the heart be. You can never become solitary in heart unless you renounce the love of all creatures.*

TWENTY-THIRD SATURDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

THE ROAD TO SOLITUDE.

1st Point. Put all creatures far away from you if you desire God to visit you. Make all creatures keep silence if you wish God to speak to you. Detach yourself from all creatures if you wish God to love you. Oh solitude of the body! oh solitude of the mind! oh solitude of the heart! it is in these that you see, hear, and taste God.

2d Point. In which of these solitudes are you? In that of the body? Are you separated from all unprofitable companions? Do you fly all vain company, and the conversation of the world? Ah! why is it, then, that you are always talking, and can never live a single day in silence and rest, while a week's retreat is looked upon as an insupportable sacrifice? Are you in solitude of mind? Oh what a tumult of thought! Why all this noise and confusion in your imagination? Are you in solitude of heart? Ah! alas, the poor heart remains not in itself; it is forever vacillating from one side to the other; it flies over the earth and finds no habitation less inconvenient than its own. Oh what a multitude of desires torment and tear it.

3d Point. Go from hence, ye turbulent affections; go from hence, ye restless and hasty desires; go from hence, ye importunate thoughts, and let Jesus enter. He does not love tumult, but delights in solitude and silence. We will go, my well-beloved; we will abandon the noise and din of the world, and all the enjoyments that it offers us, and go into the desert. We will fly to holy solitude, because it is there Thou wilt speak to my heart. Oh Lord God, there are but few hearts which listen to thy voice; there are but few men, oh Jesus, who converse familiarly with

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

Thee. Why is this? Because there are but few who love Thee and take pleasure in thy company.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Behold, I will allure her, and will lead her into the wilderness: and I will speak to her heart." *Osee*, ii.

"The Lord is not in the wind. . . . . The Lord is not in the earthquake." 3 *Kings*, xix.

"And the woman fled into the wilderness." *Apocalypse*, xii.

"Lo, I have gone far off flying away; and I abode in the wil derness." *Psalm* liv.

"When thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret: and thy Father, who seeth in secret, will reward thee." *St. Matt.* vi.

"I will rise, and go about the city: in the streets and in the broad ways I will seek Him whom my soul loveth: I sought Him and found Him not." *Cant.* iii.

TWENTY-FOURTH, OR LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE GOSPEL. *St. Matthew*, xxiv. 15–35.

"At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: When you shall see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place: he that readeth, let him understand. Then they that are in Judea, let them fly to the mountains: and he that is on the housetop let him not come down to take any thing out of his house: and he that is in the field, let him not go back to take his coat. And woe to them that are with child, and give suck in those days. But pray that your flight be not in the winter, or on the Sabbath. For there shall be then great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, neither shall be. And unless those days had been shortened, no flesh could be saved: but for the sake of the elect, those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say to you: Lo, here is Christ, or there, do not believe him. For there shall arise false christs, and false prophets; and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch as to deceive (if possible) even the elect. Behold, I have told it to you beforehand. If, therefore, they shall say to you: Behold, he is in the desert; go ye not out: Behold, he is in the closets; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and appeareth again even unto the west:

so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. Wheresoever the body shall be, there shall the eagles also be gathered together. And immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened; and the moon shall not give her light; and the stars shall fall from heaven; and the powers of heaven shall be moved: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn: and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with great power and majesty. And He shall send his angels with a trumpet, and a great voice; and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the farthest parts of the heavens, to the utmost bounds of them. And from the fig-tree learn a parable: when the branch thereof is now tender, and the leaves come forth, you know that summer is nigh. So you also, when you shall see all these things, know ye that it is nigh, even at the doors. Amen, I say to you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done. Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my word shall not pass away."

Meditation.

ON THE GOSPEL.

1st Point. Christian soul! you are going to receive your Judge. Now He comes to you, sweet, humble, and patient. He will come on the last day terrible, severe, and formidable. Measure his justice by his mercy. As He bears with us now with extreme patience and sweetness; He will then treat us with inconceivable rigor. He is ready and willing to pardon us all now; then, He will pardon us nothing. He will take vengeance on us for the outrages which we have offered Him, and demand a strict account of the graces that we have received. There is nothing which ought to make me more afraid of the justice of God than the mercy He has shown me; the numberless blessings He has bestowed on me, and the graces that I have abused. The magnitude of his gifts, which I have wasted and neglected, make me worthy of the severest chastisements of his justice. Oh justice, and goodness of God! I fear, even while I adore, thy divine attributes.

Jesus, whom you are going to receive, is your God, your Redeemer, your King, your Chief, your Advocate, your Judge, your Father, your Physician, your Master, and your Spouse. He is your God who has created you; your Redeemer who has purchased you; your King who governs you; your Chief who defends you; your Advocate who pleads for you in this world; your Judge who will examine you in the other; your Father who nourishes

you; your Physician who cures you; your Master who teaches you; your Spouse who loves you, who seeks you, who gives himself entirely to you, and desires you to give yourself unreservedly to Him. Ascertain which of these titles appeals most touchingly to your soul, and make it the subject of your devotion.

2D POINT. Jesus discoursed with his disciples of the end of the world, to detach them from the possessions and pleasures of this life; to inspire them with a contempt for them; to excite them to good works; encourage them to endure much labor; to keep them fearful and vigilant, and impress them with a great horror for sin. There is nothing which inspires the heart with a greater contempt for the pleasures of this world than the shortness of their duration. How long will you continue to enjoy these false delights, and vain amusements, which make you offend God? Alas! they pass away like a dream, while the chastisements prepared for those who seek their only delight in them, shall never end. Oh, children of men! why will ye love vanity, and run after lying and deceitful pleasures?

3D POINT. When you shall see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, you will then understand that the end of all things is at hand. Your heart is the temple of God; consecrated by baptism and sanctified by the presence of the body and blood of Jesus. Is there not some abominable idol in this heart? Is not this temple profaned by some criminal affection? Do you not serve it with an idolatrous zeal, which excites the jealousy of God? Alas! I see therein idols without number to which you sacrifice your thoughts and desires. I see in this temple of the divinity the idol of human greatness, the idol of pleasure, the idol of interest, and the idol of anger and revenge. Desolation is inseparable from abomination. One is the tree, the other is the fruit thereof; one the cause, the other the effect; one the source, the other the stream. Because your heart is filled with abomination, it will fall into unhappiness and extreme desolation.

When you die, the world will be at an end with you. Your death is perhaps near at hand, and consequently your judgment. What will you wish to have done when you appear before your Judge? Have you put your affairs in order? Are your accounts ready? How many sins have you committed? Have you done penance for them? Where are your good works, your charity, your alms-deeds? These are all that you can carry with you beyond the grave. All that will console and defend you at the tribunal of justice.*

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

TWENTY-FOURTH MONDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE SAME GOSPEL.

1st Point. Besides the particular judgment to which it is necessary to submit at the moment of our death, there will be another, and universal one at the end of the world. In order that the sentence which has been executed in secret shall be made known to angels and to men; in order that the justice of God and the wisdom of his Providence may be recognized by the good and bad; in order that the body which has participated in the good and evil of the soul shall also have part in its recompense, and in its chastisements; in order that the righteous who have been despised before men shall be honored before them, and that the impious who have been honored shall be filled with confusion; in order that the Jews, tyrants, and persecutors of Jesus Christ, shall behold Him on the throne of his glory, and be condemned by Him whom they have treated so unworthily. Will you not be of this number?

2d Point. The judgment shall be preceded by terrible signs, as the words of Jesus Christ inform us. "*The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be moved.*" The earth shall be agitated with fearful tremblings, the sea lift itself to the clouds, and amaze and terrify the living *by reason of the confusion of its roaring;* the air shall be filled with fire, with lightning, thunder, and meteors, and other terrible signs which will *cause men to wither away for fear, and expectation of what shall follow.* The sign of the cross shall appear in the heavens for the consolation of the good, and to the terror and confusion of the wicked. *And He shall send his angels with a trumpet, which will sound with a great noise, to the uttermost parts of the earth. And at the sound thereof the dead shall rise from their graves, and Jesus will come in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty.*

All this shall be accomplished, when time is to be no more, and also at the termination of your life. At the hour of death your mind will become obscured, and your imagination be terrified by horrible phantoms. All your senses will fall into doubt; the dust of your body shall be shaken to its depths; the cold sweats of dissolution, like a deluge of water, shall flow over you; the

fire of fever consume you; the angel of God shall sound his trumpet, and say to you: *Arise ye dead, and come to judgment.* Come, and render a strict account of your whole life. Oh, what an account! oh, what a judgment! oh death! oh life! oh inevitable sentence! oh eternity! Who will not fear? Who so mad as not to endeavor to escape the wrath to come?

3d Point. Prepare for death which approaches, and for the judgment which will follow.

Pray your Judge, whom you are now going to receive, to be favorable to you in your last moments; ask of Him pardon for your sins; make a firm resolution to serve Him better from henceforth; feed Him in the persons of the poor; visit Him in prison; assist Him in hospitals; do Him good in the person of your neighbor, that He may, at the last day, instead of condemning you, thank and commend you.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"This Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, so shall He come as you have seen Him going into heaven." *Acts*, i.

"Then shall all the trees of the woods rejoice, before the face of the Lord, because He cometh; because He cometh to judge the earth." *Psalm* xcv.

"Therefore, judge not before the time." 1 *Corinthians*, iv.

"For perverse thoughts separate from God; and his power, when it is tried, reproveth the unwise." *Wisdom*, i.

"But the day of the Lord shall come as a thief." 2 *Peter*, iii.

"Seeing, then, that all these things are to be dissolved, what manner of people ought you to be in holy conversation, and godliness?" *Ibid.*

"He hath prepared his throne in judgment: and He shall judge the world in equity. He shall judge the people in justice." *Psalm* ix.

TWENTY-FOURTH TUESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE AFFAIR OF OUR SALVATION.

1st Point. Your salvation is your own affair; your salvation is your only affair; your salvation is a great and important affair. Since, then, it is your own affair, you ought to work for it; since

it is your only affair, you ought to work only for it; since it is so great an affair, you ought to work for it with all your strength, and all the application of your mind.

2d Point. God has thought from all eternity of this affair; the Son of God came into the world for this affair; all the time that He was on earth He labored only for this affair; He died on the cross to consummate this affair; our good angels occupy themselves day and night with this affair; all the universe acts and moves to accomplish this affair.

3d Point. All your happiness depends on this affair; all time and eternity turn on this affair; all the spirits of evil work only to ruin this affair; you cannot, without care and application, succeed in this affair; if death surprises you, you can no longer work for this affair; you are, then, without reason or judgment if you devote your thoughts to any thing except this affair.

And, notwithstanding all this, you think not of it; you neglect it, as though it were a matter of no importance; you think of every thing in preference to this; you exert yourself for the attainment of perishable treasures, neglecting this which is eternal. The affairs of time alone appear great and important to you, while you regard those of eternity as nothing. Oh, how your sentiments will change at the hour of your death! You will then ardently wish for time to repair your fault, but the angel of the Lord will have sworn, by Him who liveth in heaven, that time for you shall be no more. Do good, then, while you have time, for it will soon pass, with all its opportunities, forever away. Think only of this affair. Abandon the trifling and transitory pursuits of this life, to work out the great affair of your salvation.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"But one thing is necessary." *Luke*, x.

"For what doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" *St. Matt.* xvi.

"Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" *Ibid.*

"Attend to thyself." 1 *Timothy*, iv.

"Have pity on thy own soul, pleasing God." *Ecclesiasticus*, xxx.

TWENTY-FOURTH WEDNESDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THE GRACES WHICH WE HAVE ABUSED AND NEGLECTED, AND OF WHICH WE SHALL HAVE TO RENDER A STRICT ACCOUNT AT THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

1st Point. The consciousness of having abused and neglected the grace of God, will render judgment still more terrible to our soul. There is nothing more useful, nothing more necessary, and nothing more precious than grace. Without grace we cannot have a good thought, or conceive a good desire. With grace you can work out your salvation, and lay up eternal treasures in heaven. All that this earth contains is not worth the smallest degree of grace; and, notwithstanding all this, you slight it, and stifle it in your heart.

2d Point. Grace is a gift of God, and one of the greatest that He can bestow on us in this life. It is a divine seed, whose fruition is glory. Jesus Christ spent his life in labors, and died in cruel torments on the cross, that we might merit it. Graces are the talents which He distributes to men, that they may profit by them. What an insult to God to despise his gifts! What an outrage to Jesus Christ to trample his blood under foot! What a crime to stifle the growth of this divine seed! What injustice and faithlessness to bury the talents of God, and not profit by them, as He designed we should!

3d Point. He who profits by his talents receives more, and is liberally recompensed. He who buries his talents is deprived of them, and condemned to the fires of hell. Salvation often depends on the good or bad use one shall have made of grace. He who despises the gifts he has received does not merit any more. The mercies of God are infinite, but their effects are limited. For instance, there is the grace of penance and prayer, which He offers even to the dying sinner! But what impression will it make on the hardened heart? How can we suppose that one who has despised grace all his life will profit by it in his last moments?

Come, render an account to God of all the blessings which He has bestowed on you! What have you profited by his graces? Can you aver that there has been any thing wanting for your salvation? Can any one have had a more assured belief, more inspirations, more light, more secret advice, more interior touches,

more remorse of conscience, more movements of the heart, more instructions, more corrections, more threats, and more chastisements than yourself? What has it all profited you? Where have you buried these talents? What fruit have you derived from the pious books that you have read? from the numerous sermons that you have heard? from the many meditations that you have made? from your reception of the sacraments? from so many absolutions that have been granted to you? and from so many other blessings, natural and supernatural, which God has lavished freely, and without price on you? "*Woe to thee, Corozain; woe to thee, Bethsaida: for if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the mighty works that have been wrought in you, they would have done penance long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you.*"* Let these threats terrify you; stand in great fear of this malediction; do penance for the past; arrange your affairs in order for the future; profit by the grace which even now visits you, for it may be the last you shall ever receive, as death may surprise you; or you may be so enfeebled by the sinking of nature when it touches your heart again, as, morally speaking, to be unable to co-operate with it.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Woe to thee that spoilest; shalt not thyself also be spoiled? and thou that despisest, shalt not thyself also be despised?" *Isaias*, xxxiii.

"I called and you refused; I stretched out my hand, and there was none that regarded. You have despised all my counsel, and have neglected my reprehensions. I also will laugh in your destruction; and will mock when that shall come to you which you feared." *Proverbs*, i.

"I go my way, and you shall seek me, and you shall die in your sin." *St. John*, viii.

"Extinguish not the Spirit." 1 *Thessalonians*, v.

"He will bring those evil men to an evil end: and will let out his vineyard to other husbandmen, that shall render Him the fruit in due season." *St. Matthew*, xxi.

"Take the pound away from him, and give it to him that hath the ten pounds." *St. Luke*, xix.

*St. Luke, x. 13.

TWENTY-FOURTH THURSDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON RELIGIOUS DISCIPLINE, AND THE CARE THAT OUGHT TO BE OBSERVED BY A RELIGIOUS IN KEEPING HIS RULES.*

1st Point. At the last day, man shall be judged by the law of nature; the Christian by the law of grace; the religious by the law of his order. He who obeys the law of nature is a perfect man; he who obeys the law of grace is a perfect Christian; and he who obeys the law of his order is a perfect religious.

If religion is an edifice, rules are the foundation thereof; if religion is a body, rules are its nerves and veins; if religion is a fortress, rules are its walls; if religion is a sacred place, rules are its enclosure.

2d Point. If you are not faithful to your rules, you are not a religious; if you keep them only in part, you are only a religious in part, or, rather, you are not one at all. Is it possible to be a Christian if you believe only a portion of the truths of faith, and keep only a part of the commandments? The same may be applied to a religious who does not keep all the rules of his order.

3d Point. The blood runs through the veins to every part of the body, and grace runs, through the obedience one renders to his rules, into every part of the soul. In the same degree that you violate your rule do you lose grace. One cannot separate a vein, however small, without placing himself in danger of death; one cannot break a little rule without putting himself in danger of falling into considerable faults.

4th Point. The obligations of a religious life tend to perfection, and rules are the means of attaining it. Can he ever hope to arrive at the end, who neglects the means provided to take him thither? There is no rule, however unimportant it may appear, which may not be a means ordered by God for our perfection and salvation; no point which may not be a channel of his graces; which may not bear the mark of his authority; which may not be a declaration of his power; which has not the seal of his goodness and the character of his sanctity.

1st Point. If you are out of the regular order of your vocation, and are not exact in obeying your rules, your virtues are de-

* He who is not a *religious* can apply these considerations to the rules of his profession or state, or make use of one of the preceding meditations.—*Crasset.*

lusions, your devotions irregularities, and in place of approaching perfection, you wander far away from it. Whatever good you do while you live in defiance to your rules, is not a virtue but a vice. All your irregular penances will draw on you chastisements instead of recompense.

2d Point. What is this spirit of singularity? It is ageing astray from common sense, a weakness of reason, a mark of folly and pride, a characteristic of heresy, a mockery of religion, the ruin of communities, the spirit of Satan, the enemy of order, a schism, a heresy in matters of devotion, a presumption of heart, a public scandal, and a species of apostasy.

3d Point. He who is not in order is reproved and chastised by the Prince of order. He who separates himself from the community loses the graces of the community; he who distinguishes himself from his brethren, by an irregular life, combats alone, and can claim no protection from them; he has no longer part in the merits of the state to which he was called; he is a member separated from the body from which it derived its spirit and life, and being separated, is dead. Since religious are bound together by common rules, he who refuses to keep them ought to be ranked among the dead; and in a manner excommunicated, since he no longer participates in the merits of his order.

1st Point. All is great in the service of God; his will elevates all that He has ordered; it is He who has established these rules and given these laws; it is God who has marked out for you this road, by which you may arrive at perfection. If, then, He commands you to perform some small duty, dare you say that you are doing nothing, and that it is too trivial an affair for you to trouble yourself to be obedient in? A good servant makes no distinction between the great and the less. All that his master orders him to do appears great in his eyes, because he sees on it the stamp of his seal and of his authority.

2d Point. God conducts every thing to its end, and urges all creatures to their centre. The inanimate by the weight of his power; the living by a secret instinct; and the rational by the laws which He prescribes for them. Thus, when you go astray from your rules you stray from the guidance of God. Can you do this without danger of being lost? If you keep order, order will preserve you; if you disturb it, it will disturb you; if you destroy it, it will destroy you.

3d Point. Oh Christian and religious soul, do not disturb and

scandalize your brethren and sisters by your irregularities; do not undermine the foundation of your order by your infraction of its rules; do not ruin the staff of your piety, and lose the merits of your vocation, which merits are inseparable from your rules. Why will you tear the bowels of your Mother? why afflict the heart of the best of fathers? His Spirit is contained in the rules He has provided for your advancement in spiritual things. You offend Him when you violate them; you despise Him when you neglect them; you treat Him who is appointed to conduct you with insolence; you virtually accuse Him of tyranny, because you see fit, in the rebellion of your heart, to consider his commands as impossible and unreasonable.

1st Point. Where are the states or communities that can exist for any length of time without law or order? Laws preserve the state, and rules the community. In violating the least one of them through contempt, although it may be to you apparently unimportant, is not, as we before said, a little sin. You cannot violate it often, and voluntarily, without despising it. Consider if it be true that you wish to attain perfection, while you are so careless about rooting out an imperfection?

2d Point. Oh my God, I am guilty, and I merit chastisement for having, up to the present time, lived in religion without obedience and discipline. I wear the habit of a religious, and am not animated by the spirit of religion; I remain in this sacred place, with a mind and heart profaned by disorders and irregularities; I am the scandal of my brethren; I am a burden to my founder, despising his Spirit and violating his rules.

3d Point. Oh good Shepherd! hasten to overtake thy wandering sheep, ere it is devoured by the wolf which closely pursues it. Gather it once more into the fold. Restore me to the order of thy grace, that I may be faithful to my vocation, in rendering obedience to my rules, by which I shall once more merit thy gracious protection. Alas, I have so long transgressed against order. Oh, what account shall I be able to render for the numberless graces that I have received and wasted, and for having so often violated my rules? All my faults are inexcusable, because I have known my duty and perversely omitted to do it, nor desired to perform it; because I have known that which Thou didst desire of me, and refused to obey. Oh my God, like the servant, who, knowing the will of his master, and did it not, I deserve to be beaten with many stripes, and treated without mercy for having

run counter to thy designs for my perfection, and afflicted thy holy Spirit by my perverse disregard of thy inestimable graces. From this moment, oh my God, I renew my vows in all humility, and with an utter dependence on thy grace to assist me in faithfully complying with all the rules appertaining to my vocation or state of life.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"If you love me, keep my commandments." *St. John*, xiv.

"He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in that which is greater. And he that is unjust in that which is little, is unjust also in that which is greater." *St. Luke*, xvi.

"He that contemneth small things, shall fall little by little." *Ecclesiasticus*, xix.

"But they provoked to wrath, and afflicted the Spirit of his holy One: and He was turned to be their enemy, and He fought against them." *Isaias*, lxiii.

"Hated by all men as a forsaker of the laws, and execrable as an enemy of his country and countrymen, he was thrust out into Egypt." 2 *Machabees*, v.

"For thy judgments, O Lord, are great; and thy words cannot be expressed; therefore undisciplined souls have erred." *Wisdom*, xvii.

TWENTY-FOURTH FRIDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

ON THESE WORDS: "BUT PRAY THAT YOUR FLIGHT BE NOT IN THE WINTER."

On fervor of spirit.

1st Point. The spirit of devotion relaxes, grows cold and weary, even in the greatest saints, if they use no means to preserve and increase fervor. 1. This inclination to tepidity arises from our nature, which, being come from nothingness, always tends to its origin; it is like water, which grows cold if it is not always kept on the fire. 2. It arises from the nature of grace, which is in our soul as in a strange soil, surrounded by thorns and noxious weeds which impede its growth; exposed to winds and tempests, which root it up, and combating with the cold and frost which will kill it if we do not take care. 3. It is caused by the inconstancy and frivolity of man, whose mind is as variable as the winds, whose soul is forever agitated and in motion like the

sea, and filled with impetuosity and instability. 4. It is the effect of the temptations of the devil, who is unwearied in tempting, but whom one grows weary of resisting. 5. It is the result of the passions, which shake the foundations of virtue; of wicked habits, which it is necessary to combat unceasingly, and which we too soon grow weary of repressing. 6. If, then, one does not oppose all these evils with a steadfast violence, he will soon relax in all spiritual progress, lose fervor, and become weary.

2D POINT. Why is it necessary to serve God with fervor? Because He loves us, and the love He bears us is infinite and eternal; because He is infinitely amiable, and weighs us down with undeserved blessings; because we are under the most important obligations to love Him with a love which never says, "*It is enough;*" because we never love Him in a manner worthy of his adorable perfections, or as much as we are capable of loving Him. It is, then, necessary to love Him more and more, and never to grow cold in his love. God will not tolerate a service which is rendered with unwillingness and vexation. He holds accursed all those who do his will with negligence; He would rather they should abandon his service entirely than to serve Him so basely; and prefers coldness to lukewarmness. These base and slothful servants burden his heart, and compel Him to vomit them forth. There is no stopping-place in the road of virtue; no place of easy repose, where the soul can rest from her labors. Life is a restless stream, and our passions are the torrents, which will sweep us away with resistless force if we do not oppose them. In the road of virtue if we do not advance we retrograde, if we are not ascending we are descending, and if we are not growing better, we are becoming worse.

3D POINT. Who ought to serve God with fervor? The obligation rests equally on all, the young and the old. The young, because they have strong passions, and strength to fast and practise mortification, which they cannot do when they are old. Great results depend on small beginnings; the safety of the edifice depends on its foundation, the life of the tree on its roots, the fulness of a stream on its source, and the tranquillity of old age on its youth. An edifice whose foundation is bad will certainly fall, a tree whose roots are diseased will never bear good fruit, if water is poisoned at its source the stream will also be, and if a man's youth has been spent in corrupt pleasures his age will be also corrupt. Youth is nature's spring-time, and the flowers produced then are infinitely pleasing to God. Jesus Christ called children to Him; He embraced and blessed them. The young have need

of many powerful graces to enable them to resist their passions. He who goes astray in the commencement of a voyage finds great difficulty in retracing his way. Commonly speaking, man's salvation depends on the manner in which he has spent the years of his youth.*

TWENTY-FOURTH SATURDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Meditation.

SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

1st Point. There is no reason why those who are advanced in years should be less fervent than those who are young. On the contrary, they ought to be more so, because they have more knowledge and experience, and their passions are more moderated; because they have received more graces, and much is expected from him who has received much; because having lived a longer time they are consequently more indebted to God, who has been the author of every good gift they have received; because being further removed from their principal, they are more languishing, as a ray becomes more feeble in proportion as it is distant from the sun; because they are nearer their last end, and ought to be more fervent, even as the elementary bodies acquire a more rapid movement as they approach the centre. They are near God, soon to appear before Him and render to Him an account of their life. What more powerful incentive than this to fervor? Add to these reasons this consideration: that their actions are all so many good examples, or else so many scandals to the young, and that it were better that a mill-stone were hung about their necks, and that they were cast into the depths of the sea, than that they should injure the innocence of the young, or lead them into vice by bad example and scandals.

2d Point. Who can explain the extent of the peril incurred by both old and young when they become lax in the service of God? Nature presumes on a little indulgence, craves still more, and becomes exacting and insolent. The passions revolt, and insensibly destroy the empire of grace. Sins become more frequent and malignant, for the injuries that we receive from a friend are much more painful and unpardonable than those which are inflicted by an enemy. God will not protect or defend a base and

* Words of Scripture at the end of the following Meditation.

unfaithful soul as He did when it was in grace and fervor. The few graces it receives it does not co-operate with. It commits great sins, and does not perceive their enormity. Then, when grace withdraws, it conceives a great disgust for devotion; it is distracted and dissipated from without because it can find no satisfaction within. This disgust is followed by hardness and insensibility to all the touches of grace, to the advice of confessors, to the reproofs of superiors, to admonitions and threats from the pulpit, to the influence of all pious reading all good example, and finally to remorse of conscience. From insensibility it passes to contempt, which is the very bottom of iniquity, the character of reprobation, and the last degree of impenitence; which attracts and induces mortal sins, a sudden and unprovided death, and the perdition of the soul. Christ vomits that soul from his mouth and banishes it from his sacred heart forever.

3d Point. Oh my God, I dread this state, and fear that I have fallen into it. Alas! I was once fervent in thy service, but I am now cold. I omit my devotions, or when I do engage in them I have a multitude of distractions; I hate solitude; I no longer know what it is to enter into and examine myself with recollection; I only desire to converse, to enjoy, and please myself; I do no more penance; I have laid down the arms of my warfare, and granted a truce to my enemies. What, Christian soul, is it thus you correspond with the graces that Almighty God has vouchsafed to you? Are you not under a greater obligation to serve Him to-day than you were yesterday? Is Jesus less attractive in his divine perfections at present than He was formerly? What do you expect to do? Do you expect to reach heaven without doing violence to the evil inclinations of your nature? Do you expect to be crowned if you give up the conflict? Is it possible to remain stationary on a rapid river, without either ascending or descending? Are you not afraid of the wrath of the Lamb? He cannot much longer bear with your tepidity; you are a burden on his sacred heart, and He will drive you forth forever, unless you hasten to do penance and return to your first fervor.

Oh my soul, attend to these words uttered by Jesus Christ: "*Be mindful, therefore, from whence thou art fallen: and do penance, and do the first works. Or else I come to thee, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place, unless thou shalt have done penance.*"* Imitate St. Paul and other great saints, who increased in fervor as they advanced in years, being afraid that,

* Apocalypse, ii. 5.

after having saved others, they should themselves become cast away. Renew in your heart a spirit of devotion, charity, and mortification; of devotion towards God, charity towards your neighbor, and mortification towards yourself. Advance steadfastly and swiftly without stopping to rest. If you say, I am weary, I have labored enough, fought enough, you will never be crowned with victory in heaven.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"In spirit fervent." *Romans*, xii.

"I know thy works; that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold, or hot: but because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold, nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth." *Apocalypse*, iii.

"For which cause I admonish thee, that thou stir up the grace of God, which is in thee by the imposition of my hands." 2 *Timothy*, i.

"Woe to them that are faint-hearted, who believe not God: and therefore they shall not be protected by Him. Woe to them that have lost patience, and that have forsaken the right way, and have gone aside into crooked ways. And what will they do, when the Lord shall begin to examine?" *Ecclesiasticus*, ii.

"And be ye renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, who, according to God, is created in justice and holiness of truth." *Ephesians*, iv.

"Let us hasten, therefore, to enter into that rest." *Hebrews*, iv.

"Save thy life: look not back, neither stay thou in all the country about; but save thyself in the mountain, lest thou be also consumed." *Genesis*, xix.

EIGHTH OF SEPTEMBER.

THE FESTIVAL OF THE NATIVITY OF MARY.

Meditation.

ON THE HOLY NAME OF MARY.

1st Point. The name of Mary rejoices the angels, consoles men, and puts demons to flight. After the name of Jesus, there is no name that is sweeter; no name that is more powerful; no name

that is more holy than that of Mary. This name signifies a lady and a sea; a lady of power and consolation, and a sea of bitterness; a lady now, because once a servant; a sea of bitterness it was for her, of consolation for us. If you desire to command, you must first learn the science of obedience; if you wish to be consoled, you must suffer and endure. Oh holy Virgin, I desire to partake of the chalice of thy afflictions, that I may partake of the torrent of thy consolations. I wish to have a spirit of perfect obedience like unto thine, in order to reign in heaven with thee.

2D POINT. Oh, glorious Queen! I rejoice at thy birth, regarding it as the beginning of my life and salvation. I salute thee in thy cradle, as on the throne of thy grace and innocence. Thou didst not, like ourselves, come into the world stained with original sin, a criminal, a slave, and bound under subjection to the enemy of souls! Thou wert crowned with grace in thy birth, while the rest of mankind are under the curse of sin before they are born.

3D POINT. Consecrate yourself, Christian soul, to the service of the holy and immaculate Virgin. Regard her as your lady, your mother, your advocate. Honor her as lady, love her as mother, invoke her as advocate. Pray to her as lady, to take you under her gracious protection; as mother, to give you her blessing; as advocate, to favor you with her intercession.

4TH POINT. You are not a servant of Mary if you are not one of Jesus Christ; you are not a child of Mary if you are not the child of Jesus. She will not pray for you if you are ashamed to pray to and invoke her aid; she will not assist you at the hour of your death if you do not serve her faithfully during your life. If you wish to be truly one of her family love and imitate her purity of soul and body. Offer her every day a prayer; every week an alms; every month a mortification; and on all of her feasts a communion. Is it loving Mary to hate her Son? Is it honoring Mary to despise her Son? What greater contempt can you show her than not to desire to eat at his table and receive Him into your heart.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"Thou art the glory of Jerusalem; thou art the joy of Israel; thou art the honor of our people." *Judith*, xv.

"Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army in array." *Canticle*, vi.

"Blessed art thou, O daughter, by the Lord the most high God, above all women upon the earth." *Judith*, xiii.

"Blessed art thou by thy God in every tabernacle of Jacob, for in every nation which shall hear thy name the God of Israel shall be magnified on occasion of thee." *Judith*, xiii.

"This same (*i. e. this son*) shall comfort us from the works and labors of our hands on the earth, which the Lord hath cursed." *Genesis*, v.

"A star shall rise out of Jacob." *Numbers*, xxiv.

"The little fountain which grew into a river, and was turned into a light, and into the sun, and abounded into many waters." *Esther*, x.

"After her shall virgins be brought to the king." *Psalm* xliv.

FIRST OF NOVEMBER.

FEAST OF ALL SAINTS.

THE GOSPEL. *St. Matt.* v. 1–12.

"AT that time, Jesus seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain: and when He had sat down, his disciples came to Him. And opening his mouth He taught them, saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake; rejoice and be exceeding glad, because your reward is very great in heaven."

Meditation.

ON THE HAPPINESS OF ALL SAINTS.

1ST POINT. Lift up your heart and soul to the highest heaven. Enter into the glorious palace of the divinity. Contemplate the great and resplendent company of saints therein, and consider the happiness which they enjoy.

2D POINT. Heaven is a place exempt from every evil, and filled

with an infinitude of delights, where the souls and bodies of the saints will enjoy unchanging rest. St. Paul says: That eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, that which God hath prepared for those who love Him. Have you seen all the splendors and magnificence of this earth? Have you imagined all that the human mind is capable of conceiving of their splendors? Still it is all nothing compared to heaven. It is there that God reveals in splendor his power and magnificence. What cannot God do? Is there any thing more admirable than this world? and after all it is but the dim shadow of that celestial land, the distant outposts of that glorious palace! If God, then, has prepared so admirable a dwelling for beasts and criminal men, what has He reserved for his saints and his best friends? You cannot read without horror of the sufferings of martyrs, and yet all that they endured was as nothing compared to the exceeding great reward that awaited them in the land of the living. To understand its worth it is only necessary to consider the price that was paid for it, being nothing less than the blood of a God, which was shed to the last drop that we may merit heaven. Oh, heaven is a prize of inestimable worth, a goal where all labors cease, and where the weary rest forever.

Is not God more liberal in his recompenses than in his chastisements? What is there more miserable than a lost soul? Contrast with its unavailing and unutterable woe the happiness of the saints! They shall, says David, be inebriated with a torrent of delights; they shall be loaded with joy and contentment; they shall have all that they desire, and nothing that they can fear. Their good shall be unmixed with evil, their pleasure with grief; their abundance with poverty; their rest shall be without inquietude, their life without death, and their felicity without end. "*Without end!*" Oh, heaven! my soul expands with ineffable joy when I reflect that I can, through the merits of Jesus, win an entrance into thy glory. Happy, oh Lord, are those who rest in thy house, they will praise Thee in the highest heaven.

3d Point. The object of our happiness shall be God, who is the essence of all beauty, of all goodness, and of all pleasures. He will fill our souls with the plenitude of his light; our will with the abundance of his peace; our memory with the extent of his eternity; our subsistence with the purity of his being, and all our senses and powers with the immensity of his benefits and the infinitude of his riches. We shall see Him as He is. We shall love Him without defect. We shall behold Him, the Source of all beauty, and the sight will ravish our mind; we shall see Him,

the Source of all goodness, and the contemplation thereof will satiate our soul with enjoyment. O sweet occupation! O inestimable happiness! My soul, what are you doing on earth? What is it that you seek among creatures? Are they capable of filling the heart? Can the pleasures of the senses content and satiate the spirit? Oh, my God, I shall never be satisfied until Thou hast manifested thy glory to me.

4TH POINT. How shall we enjoy God? By a peaceable possession, as of an inheritance which can never be disputed. By an intimate union with Him, without the fear of ever being separated from Him. In virtue of this union we shall become like God, says St. John, that is to say, pure, holy, powerful, wise, and happy, as He is. He will transform us into himself, not by the destruction of our being, but by uniting it to his. He will communicate to us his own nature, greatness, strength, knowledge, sanctity, riches, and felicity. We will exclaim in the plenitude of our joy: "*O it is good to be here.*" Oh, who can describe the joy of a soul, which, on entering into heaven, discovers its sovereign good? O, what love! O, what ecstasy! O, what delight! O, what praise, thanksgiving, and acts of grace, characterize its every movement.

5TH POINT. The body shall share in the felicity of the soul, which felicity consists of four things. 1st. The beauty and splendor of the place it is in, whlch is the house of God. 2d. The glorious company of the saints, who, all being united by an inviolable charity, and exchange of love, enjoy their treasures, their delights, and happiness in common. 3d. The gifts of glory with which the body shall be clothed, which are impassibility, brightness, agility, and subtility. Finally, in the pleasures of the senses, which shall know a satisfaction that is pure and without alloy, disgust, or fatigue. Behold what is prepared for us, provided we refuse to our bodies the forbidden pleasures of this life, and afflict them by fasts and penances, for it is impossible to have consolations in this world and the next.

6TH POINT. But that which shall fill up the measure of our happiness is, "*that it will never end.*" Eternity is a permanent duration, which has neither past nor future, but is always present. Thus the saints enjoy each moment all the joys of eternity, though not all in full, for they each moment discover some new delight in the contemplation of God, some new beauty, and additional cause for rejoicing. Oh, holy Zion! where all remains, and nothing passes away; where all is found, and nothing is wanting; where all is sweet, and nothing is bitter; where all is

calm, and nothing is agitated. O, happy land! whose roses are without thorns; pleasures without griefs; peace without combats; and life without end. Oh, holy Thabor! oh, palace of the living God! oh, celestial Jerusalem! where we will sing eternally the beautiful canticles of Zion. Who can find difficulty in working, knowing that this will be the recompense of our labors? Who will refuse to persevere in the conflict, seeing the glorious crowns which are prepared for those who win?

7TH POINT.- Alas! I am far from thee, oh beautiful Zion! By the river of Babylon I toil, and mingle my tears with the waters! In this miserable captivity, I groan under the tyranny of my passions. The masters whom I serve treat me with merciless severity; although I endeavor to satisfy them, I cannot; the more I do, the more they require. Oh, when wilt Thou come, my Lord, to deliver me from this servitude? when wilt Thou take me from this land of exile and death? when break asunder the chains that fetter me to earth? "*How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord.*"*

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"The eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what things God hath prepared for them that love Him." 1 *Corinthians*, ii.

"We shall be filled with the good things of thy house." *Psalm* lxiv.

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth . . . . . And I heard a great voice from the throne, saying: Behold the tabernacle of the Lord with men; and He will dwell with them: And they shall be his people: and God himself with them shall be their God." *Apocalypse*, xxi.

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and death shall be no more; nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more; for the former things are passed away." *Ibid.*

"Blessed are they who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb."

* Psalm lxxxiii.

TWENTY-FIRST OF NOVEMBER.

FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Meditation.

ON THE OFFERING OUR BLESSED LADY MADE OF HERSELF TO GOD.

1st Point. Mary made an entire offering of herself to God. She offered unto Him every thing over which she had power. She offered it to Him with good will; she offered it to Him for ever, and by an irrevocable promise.

We give to God the least part of our heart; we give it to Him carelessly and grudgingly; we give it to Him with regret, and only for a season. We take it back almost as soon as given.

Oh Christian, when will you renounce those worldly ties which keep you from a full offering of yourself to God?

2d Point. Oh, holy Virgin, I give myself to thee; I give myself to thee with all my heart. I am ashamed of having deferred offering myself to thee so long. I give myself to thee by an irrevocable promise.

Offer my heart to thy divine Son. I offer it all to Him without division, without regret, and forever. Obtain for me, oh tender and compassionate mother, a favorable acceptance of the offering that I present. Take on thyself the care of my salvation; assist me at the hour of my death, and show unto me the fruit of thy womb Jesus.

WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

"It is good for a man, when he hath borne the yoke from his youth. He shall sit solitary, and hold his peace: because he hath taken it up upon himself." *Lamentations*, iii.

"But she (*the dove*) not finding where her foot might rest, returned to him into the ark." *Genesis*, viii.

"But a certain man, named Ananias, with Saphira his wife, sold a field, and by fraud kept part of the price." *Acts*, v.

"Ananias, why hath Satan tempted thy heart, that thou shouldst lie to the Holy Ghost, and by fraud keep back part of the price of the field?" *Ibid.*

"Their heart is divided: now they shall perish." *Osee*, x.

IMMOVABLE FEASTS OF THE YEAR.

EIGHTH OF DECEMBER.

FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Meditation.

ON THE GRACE OF HER CONCEPTION.

(See page 188.)

SECOND OF FEBRUARY.

PURIFICATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Meditation.

ON THE VIRTUES SHE PRACTISED IN THE TEMPLE.

(See page 191.)

TWENTY-SIXTH OF MARCH.

ANNUNCIATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

Meditation.

ON THE MYSTERY.

(See page 337.)

SECOND OF JULY.

FEAST OF THE VISITATION.

Meditation.

ON THE MYSTERY.

(See page 474.)

FIFTEENTH OF AUGUST.

ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

First Meditation.

ON THE DEATH OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

(See page 476.)

Second Meditation.

ON THE RESURRECTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

(See page 478.)

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